Guitar MAGAZINE

DEC 2019
ISSUE 375
£5.99

FUTURE SOUNDS

THE NEXT-GENERATION PLAYERS & GEAR YOU NEED TO HEAR

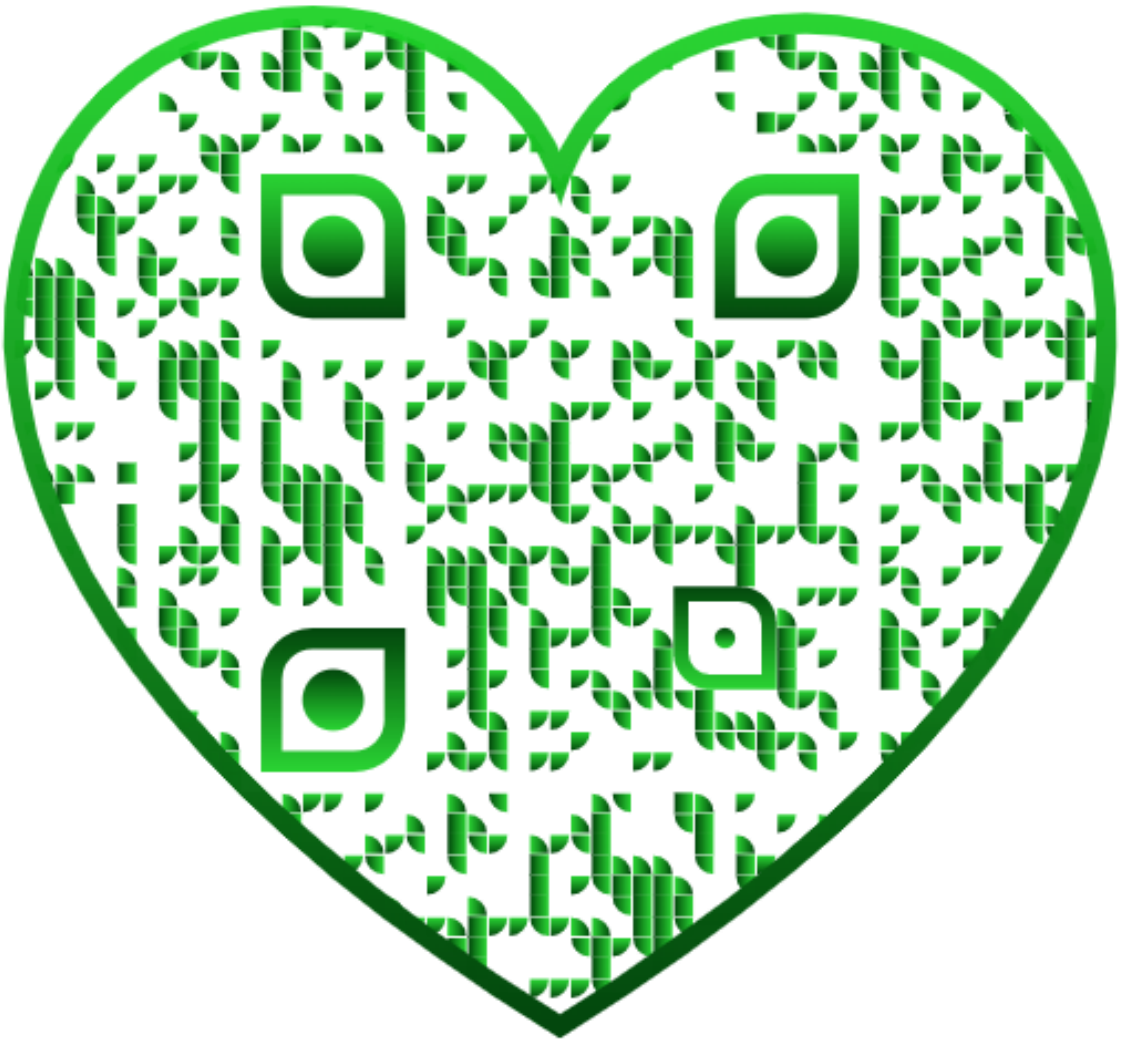
WIN!
A MOOER GE300
WORTH £745

Is Blackstar's new Silverline Series a valve-amp killer?

CORY WONG AND THE NEW WRECKING CREW RIP UP THE SESSION GUITAR RULEBOOK

CUTTING-EDGE LUTHIERY FROM RELISH, MILLIMETRIC AND MORE

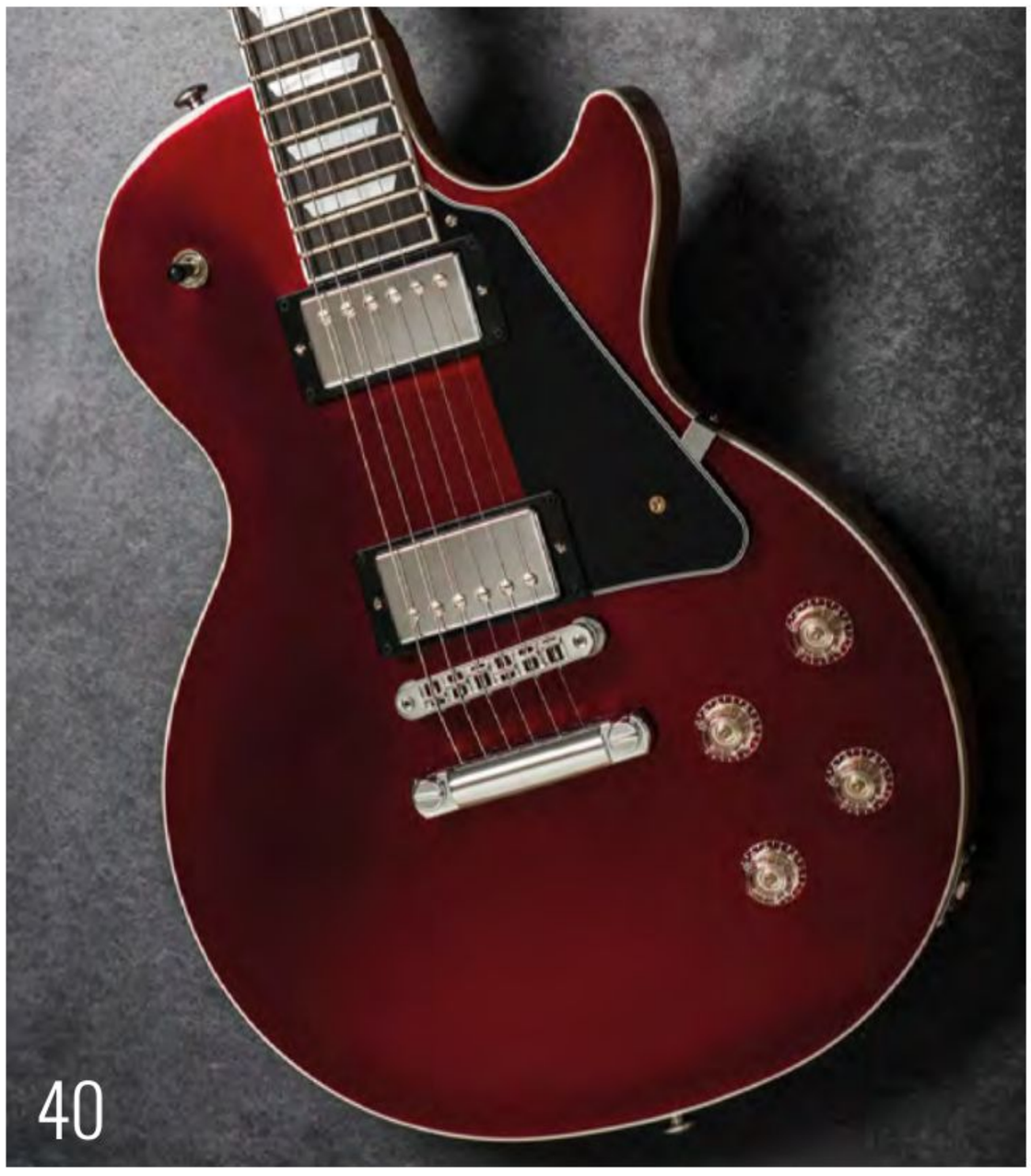
FROM GRUNGE GUITARIST TO TECH MOGUL – BEATS PRESIDENT LUKE WOOD



Lowden
GUITARS
Celebrating 45 years
of the Lowden Guitar
lowdenguitars.com/45th

45TH
ANNIVERSARY
LIMITED EDITION
45
Loaded
GUITARS

CONTENTS


40

66

22

82

120

116

28

WorldMags.net

ISSUE 375

CONTENTS

009 EDITOR'S LETTER
010 FRETBUZZ
012 SUBSCRIBE
014 ONES TO WATCH: SŒUR
016 ALBUM SPOTLIGHT: HENRY'S FUNERAL SHOE
017 THE PLAYLIST
018 WIN: A MOOER GE300 WORTH £745!
020 COVER FEATURE: FUTURE SOUNDS
022 REVIEW: MILLIMETRIC INSTRUMENTS MGS2
028 COVER FEATURE: THE NEW BREED
040 REVIEW: GIBSON LES PAUL MODERN
044 REVIEW: RELISH MARY ONE
048 COVER FEATURE: THE NEW WRECKING CREW
056 REVIEW: BLACKSTAR SILVERLINE STANDARD & STEREO DELUXE
060 REVIEW: UNIVERSAL AUDIO MARSHALL LEGENDS BUNDLE
066 THE GUITAR INTERVIEW: LUKE WOOD
082 INTERVIEW: CORY WONG
088 VINTAGE SPOTLIGHT: 1961 FENDER JAZZMASTER AKA 'PANCAKE'
094 SHOP TALK: LENTZ GUITAR
098 ASK THE AMP GUY
100 INDUSTRY INSIDER: MYTHOS PEDALS
102 RUNDOWN: LOOPER PEDALS
106 REVIEW: EASTMAN ROMEO
112 REVIEW: VUORENSAKU T FAMILY 'BIRKE'
116 REVIEW: B&G CALETTA CROSSROADS & PRIVATE BUILD
120 REVIEW: REDBEARD EFFECTS RED MIST MK IV
124 REVIEW: THORPYFX HEAVY WATER
126 REVIEW: MOOER GE300
131 DIY: HOW TO BUILD A SPEAKER CABINET PART ONE
138 ESSENTIAL BLUES PART 11: FORMING BASIC LICKS
142 CHORD CLINIC: RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS PART TWO
146 TALKBOX: IAN FOWLES

WorldMags.net

INTRODUCING THE

ORIGINAL

COLLECTION

WorldMags.net

THE **GOLDEN ERA** RETURNS.

Gibson

WWW.GIBSON.COM

WorldMags.net

eastmanguitars.com

EASTMAN

T484

MORE THAN JUST THE RIGHT SIZE.

WorldMags.net

Guitar MAGAZINE

BandLab UK Limited
Unit 7, Riverside Court,
Lower Bristol Road,
Bath BA2 3DZ

EDITORIAL

CHIEF EDITOR Chris Vinnicombe
MANAGING EDITOR Josh Gardner
PRODUCTION EDITOR Owen Bailey
PUBLISHING PRODUCTION MANAGER Craig Broadbridge
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Sam Roberts
SENIOR PRODUCT SPECIALIST Huw Price
INSTRUMENT & COVER PHOTOGRAPHY Eleanor Jane
CONTRIBUTORS Michael James Adams, Darran Charles, Chris Fantana, Rod Fogg, Leigh Fuge, Dave Hunter, Jo Johnson, Philip Millard, Richard Purvis, Michael Watts
HAVE A STORY? Email us at editors@guitar.com

SALES

ADVERTISING MANAGER Joe Supple
joe.supple@guitar.com
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER Di Marsh
di.marsh@guitar.com

PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

PRINT William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
DISTRIBUTED BY Marketforce (UK) Ltd
5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London E14 5HU

BANDLAB TECHNOLOGIES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Meng Ru Kuok
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER Ivan Chen
UK COUNTRY DIRECTOR & HEAD OF STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS (EMEA) Holly Bishop
AVP, WEB TECHNOLOGIES Laurent Le Graverend
AVP, COMMS & PARTNERSHIPS Lauren Hendry Parsons
SENIOR MANAGER, BRAND STRATEGY Krystle Hall
MANAGER, CONTENT STRATEGY Iliyas Ong
ASSOCIATE MANAGER, CONTENT STRATEGY Terence Stanley
STAFF WRITER Cillian Breathnach

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

guitar.com/subscribe
Tel +44 (0) 1371 851 882
Calls cost 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge

BANDLAB TECHNOLOGIES

All content copyright BandLab UK Limited 2019, all rights reserved. While we make every effort to ensure that the factual content of *Guitar Magazine* is correct, we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed. Please make every effort to check quoted prices and product specifications with manufacturers prior to purchase. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or resold without the prior consent of BandLab UK Limited. *Guitar Magazine* recognises all copyrights contained within this issue. Where possible, we acknowledge the copyright.

EDITOR'S LETTER

FAST FORWARD

It won't have escaped your notice that this issue is dedicated to the players and gear that are the building blocks for the future of the guitar. Although reports of its demise have been greatly exaggerated, it's true enough that our beloved instrument's role in pop culture has shifted in recent years. And with so much processing power devoted to recreating old tech, it's no wonder that outsiders sometimes look at aspects of our industry with incredulity – after all, who wants to drive a new car manufactured exactly like a death trap from the 1950s, or equip their kitchen with a NOS refrigerator containing lethal quantities of sulphur dioxide and methyl formate?

From a design perspective, the most popular tools of our trade hit their high-water marks many decades ago, but that doesn't mean guitar music is inherently retrograde. Classical composition carried on evolving ferociously long after the death of Antonio Stradivari and similarly, people will continue to pick up Strats and change the course of pop for decades to come. Starting on p28, our New Breed list proves that young and exciting guitar players of all genders and innumerable styles are still making waves – your new playlist starts here!

Of course, not everybody wants to play vintage-style gear and we'd never want the guitar industry to stop innovating. Our Future Sounds issue also includes reviews of daring modernistic designs from Millimetric and Relish, Gibson's latest reimagined take on the Les Paul Standard and Blackstar's new digital combos from the Silverline Series. We also speak to Beats president Luke Wood, get the skinny on the audio-company chief's life at the cutting edge of alternative music and find out where he sees the guitar heading – it's a fascinating read.

Finally – and I can scarcely believe I'm typing this already – NAMM 2020 is approaching fast. Please get in touch via the usual channels and let us know what you think are likely to be the key trends and biggest launches at the show. It's been a decade during which technology has made our lives as guitarists easier and even spawned new musical genres. Just like you, I can't wait to see and hear what happens next…

Chris Vinnicombe
Chief Editor, Guitar.com & Guitar Magazine
chris@guitar.com

DON'T MISS OUT!

Visit us online for the latest on gear, artists, technique and the guitar industry
Guitar.com | facebook.com/guitar | youtube.com/theguitarmagazine
instagram.com/guitar | twitter.com/guitar

WorldMags.net

FRETBUZZ

Your letters and observations on the world of guitar

Join the conversation Email us at editors@guitar.com

SG DOES IT

Hey guys, great SG feature in Issue 374! I have owned a 1974 SG Standard since the 90s and for years, it was my only guitar. However, as I got more guitars and the SG got older, I played it less and less. Recently, I fancied reacquainting myself with the SG and so for the first time in a long time, I took the guitar out of its case, plugged it in and gave it a blast – but came away sadly uninspired. What I remembered being an awesome rock machine was instead sounding pretty dull and lifeless!

Despite my disappointment, I got it out a few more times and noticed something strange. Each time I played it, I noticed that the longer I played it for, it was almost as if it was coming back to life and now it sounds great again – happy days. It did make me wonder, though – has playing it more often effectively 're-energised' the pickups? Can pickups go flat and dull – is this a thing?

ROSS BOWEN, VIA EMAIL

HUW PRICE REPLIES Ross, it seems implausible that the pickups have been 're-energised', as you put it, but that doesn't mean that playing it more hasn't had some impact on improving the tone. It could be that dirt in the control potentiometers may have been causing some odd effects – such as lower output and treble leakage. In which case, playing your SG regularly once more may have shifted some of the dirt and oxide, and made them work properly again.

Having rebuilt numerous guitars, I've noticed how much they change once they have been restrung after a long period out of commission. The tone of a guitar will often change dramatically in the first 24 hours after stringing up – and always for the better. I can't offer any scientific insights for why this might be the case, but the old adage about it 'needing to remember it's a guitar' does seem to have some basis in reality.

On the other hand, it could be that it was just your ears and expectations balancing out a little. Either way, glad you're enjoying your SG once again!

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Hi, I've just received my November copy of the mag and was pleased to read the article on that great unsung hero – the Gibson SG! it was a great and informative piece, but I'm a little disappointed that there was very little mention of the venerable P-90-loaded SG Special, which is a killer guitar!

I saw that Santana got a mention in the feature, but us Brits have had some serious Special players, too! Off the top of my head, Mick Abrahams (who I saw play with both Jethro Tull and Blodwyn Pig), his tone and technique were superb; and the late Mel Galley from Trapeze, who I was also lucky enough to see with the three-piece Trapeze at the Roundhouse in early 1972 – again, he had a killer tone through his flat-out Laney stack. Even Marc Bolan played one, in 1967, when he was in John's Children!

I actually played an extremely modified black SG for a brief period during my time with Iron Maiden, and I have been playing various SGs for years – they are truly great guitars!

ROB 'ANGELO' SAWYER, VIA EMAIL

FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Adam Bowden-Smith's double-neck banjo guitar (DIY, Issue 374) is like Frankenstein's monster's guitar! It does have a quirky-cool hillbilly charm about it, though.

ALEX SHORTLAND, VIA FACEBOOK

Regarding this 'smash-proof' all-metal guitar, is there a problem with guitars smashing themselves when nobody's looking?! I'm trying to figure out what need this guitar is supposed to be filling.

BRIAN DEJEAN, VIA FACEBOOK

'Pancake' shows that just because a guitar has been through the wars doesn't mean it can't play like a beast!

LIAM ALDRED, VIA INSTAGRAM

WorldMags.net

ACOUSTIC. ELECTRIC.
EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.

UNLOCK NEW SOUNDS WITH **THE AMERICAN ACOUSTASONIC™ TELECASTER.®**

Fender®

CRAFTED IN CORONA, CALIFORNIA

©2019 Fender Musical Instruments Corporation. FENDER, FENDER in script, TELECASTER and the distinctive headstock commonly found on Fender guitars and basses are registered trademarks of FMIC. Acoustasonic is a trademark of FMIC. All rights reserved.

WorldMags.net

THE HERCULES GS414B PLUS

The GS414B PLUS includes the upgraded built-in Auto Grip System with AGS yoke to accommodate more guitar neck sizes, attached NINA (Narrow Instrument Neck Adjustment), instant height-adjustment clutch with locking pin and upgraded foot pads.

WorldMags.net

Guitar MAGAZINE

FREE HERCULES GUITAR STAND

WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE*

SAVE 45% ON THE SHOP PRICE*

GET YOUR MONTHLY SUPPLY
OF NEW GEAR REVIEWS,
IN-DEPTH FEATURES,
WORKSHOPS AND TUITION

SPREAD THE COST
BY CONVENIENT DIRECT DEBIT*

FREE UK DELIVERY

PLUS A FREE HERCULES GUITAR STAND WORTH £39.99

NOT IN THE UK?

DON'T WORRY – WE'VE GOT SPECIAL OFFERS FOR INTERNATIONAL READERS, TOO!

EUROPE €43.95 EVERY 6 MONTHS – SAVE 27%
AUSTRALIA $74.25 AUD EVERY 6 MONTHS – SAVE 15%
USA/CANADA $49.95 EVERY 6 MONTHS – SAVE 36%
REST OF THE WORLD £34.75 EVERY 6 MONTHS

ORDER ONLINE TODAY AT GUITAR.COM/SUBSCRIBE

ORDER NOW!

ONLINE
GUITAR.COM/SUBSCRIBE
USE CODE **GMP375**

PHONE
01371 851 882
USE CODE **GMP375**

CODE **GMP375**

OFFER ENDS **31 JANUARY 2020**

*45% saving and guitar stand are available to UK customers paying by Direct Debit only. You will pay just £19.45 every 6 months, saving 45% off the UK cover price. All other savings are based on the local cover price for Europe, Australia and North America and are available when you pay by continuous card payment only. You will receive 12 issues of *Guitar Magazine* per year, starting with the next available issue.

WorldMags.net

ONES TO WATCH

SŒUR

WORDS SAM ROBERTS

The South West of England's next great guitar band on compromising, not having a bass player in the band and more…

The Bristol music scene is nurturing great guitar bands at a rapid rate, and Sœur are right at the forefront of that development.

The dual-fronted three-piece fuse traditional pop sensibilities with the aggression of Steve Albini's back catalogue and the odd injection of math-rock and metalcore. Their new EP, *No Show*, offers an insight into Sœur's ever-expanding arsenal of rousing rock songs, with growling, combative guitars from Tina Maynard and Anya Pulver and, intriguingly, no bass guitar.

The EP was recorded between Silk Mill Studios in Stoke and Seamus Wong Studios in Leicester in the space of just four days, following hot on the heels of their previous release, *Fight*, which received consistent radio airplay. The band also recorded a Maida Vale live session, only adding to the buzz around this collective of artists.

Here, Tina Maynard tells us why guitars beat pianos and talks us through recording the EP and the art of compromise…

What made you pick up a guitar?

"To be honest, I picked up a guitar because I was sick of lugging my piano around with me! Gone are the days where I brought my upright Yamaha to every gig. Guitar is better in every way – roll out of bed and pick up a guitar."

You recorded *No Show* over just four days. How do you choose the songs that ended up making the cut?

"We always go into the studio knowing what songs we're going to record, so it's not as quick a decision as you'd think. We're a very democratic band so these decisions

WorldMags.net

Sœur (l to r)· James Collins, Anya Pulver and Tina Maynard

"I PICKED UP A GUITAR BECAUSE I WAS SICK OF LUGGING MY PIANO AROUND WITH ME!" TINA MAYNARD

actually take a long time, and we're very good at compromising. For this EP, we went with the songs we were most excited by."

***Do What I Want* touches on the topic of toxic monogamy. Is that a theme that's present throughout the EP?**
"I think that idea is confined to that song. Each song has a slightly different topic and, as usual, Anya and I explore those topics from our own individual viewpoints."

What are your main guitars and amplifiers?
"I have a Fender American Standard Telecaster and go through a Laney GH50R-212 tube combo. Anya has a Les Paul Zoot Suit and goes through a bass amp as well as a guitar amp. She uses a Laney Nexus and Laney Lionheart L20T-212."

Is guitar your go-to for composition?
"For me in Sœur, most definitely. I do play a little piano, but I've never written anything on it for Sœur. Like I said before, it's just better all round, most of all in terms of convenience. I do have an acoustic that I write a lot on first; I like to thrash ideas through acoustically before bringing them to the band."

Why don't you use a bass live?
"The simple answer is really because Anya and I don't know how to play bass! We have entertained the idea once or twice, but we're happy as we are now, for now. One of us will usually fill that frequency and take the bass 'role' so to speak anyway, so we haven't seemed to miss it too much."

What's next for Sœur?
"We're heading out on tour next month supporting Saint Agnes and then at the end of November, spilling into December, we'll be up and down the country on our own headline tour promoting the EP. We'll be writing when we can and sorting out a plan for the next period. No rest!" G

Sœur's new EP *No Show* is out 23 September

WorldMags.net

THE PLAYLIST

ALBUM SPOTLIGHT

HENRY'S FUNERAL SHOE
SMARTPHONE RABBIT HOLE

INTERVIEW SAM ROBERTS

South Wales outfit Henry's Funeral Shoe introduce brass and invite friends of Van Morrison onto their newest album

Formed by brothers Aled and Brennig Clifford in the South Wales valleys, Henry's Funeral Shoe have become one of the torchbearers for boot-stomping, Delta-infused rock. The duo's new album sees them take a slight left turn, introducing brass sections and more nuanced lyrical content, proving that they're not like other prefab bands in their respective wheelhouse.

Their third LP, *Smartphone Rabbit Hole*, was predominantly recorded with a Vintage V6 and a modified Fender Stratocaster into a Matamp head and cab, by way of a DigiTech Whammy.

Prior to their latest release, the band have also found themselves sharing stages with the likes of Kiss and Lynyrd Skynyrd in Miami, while their singles have been utilised by Fiat, Marshall Headphones and others. Here, Aled Clifford talks us through his favourite guitar parts on *Smartphone Rabbit Hole*.

SMARTPHONE RABBIT HOLE

"This was the last song we'd written for the album. We were having trouble nailing a different song, which didn't make the album, then this bad boy jumped out and it kind of wrote itself. As a duo, we focus on riffs and different sections to keep things interesting, so I don't get to play guitar solos often. But when we were in the studio, they had this really over-the-top fuzz that demanded to be heard. I really enjoyed playing a solo and pretending to be Rory Gallagher for a time."

FIRING LINE

"We managed to get a great The Who *5:15* vibe with this, once the horns were on it. It sounded great in practice, but I could never pull it off live and we might never play it live again – but we're over the moon with how the recording sounds, so at least people get that experience. I like to experiment as much as I can with making riffs not sound like a guitar, hence why I use the Whammy pedal so much and why it's all over this album. Alice Russell did a great cover of *Brown Sugar* and I loved how instead of the main guitar riff, they used percussion and a vocal/keys melody.

"I used that idea in our breakdown with the DigiTech Whammy to give an effect which I hope doesn't sound like a guitar. It's good to be a magpie."

HIGH SHOULDERS EVERYWHERE

"This song we had written for some time and we'd been playing it live for a while, so it was bedded in and ready to go. Nailed in one take – until later in the session Tim, the engineer, pulled out the crazy fuzz.

"I went back and did the opening guitar break and other sections with this fuzz. I have the Whammy pedal set at 4/5ths and, coupled with my Aramat Mojo Fuzz and his wild fuzz, it leaves some great overtones. They're really amplified when played through headphones."

RIGHT TIME

"I like the way this came together. It started out like Little Feat's *Two Trains*, but I played it to a friend and hero of mine, who was MD to Van Morrison for years and he said it had a Stax vibe. So we worked up a drum part to make it fit stylistically, whilst also adding horns.

"I played the main rhythm which is in Open G and he did these great Steve Cropper-style fills and overdubbed a wonderful rhythm part in standard tuning. All of this while beguiling us with stories of Dr John, Jerry Lee Lewis, Solomon Burke… He's played with everyone, I love being around him and it's probably my favourite track on the album."

DAMN RIGHT I MEAN IT

"I love how aggressive this sounds. It pushes itself along and demands to be heard and played loud. We did it all in one take, including the vocals. I even managed to nail the guitar break in the middle the first time, which is a miracle for me! I use the Whammy again on this song and it gives things extra volume and an out-of-phase effect, which I love." **G**

***Smartphone Rabbit Hole* by Henry's Funeral Shoe is out now**

WorldMags.net

This month's essential tracks for guitar lovers…

R.E.M.
Let Me In (Remix)

A eulogy for Kurt Cobain, *Let Me In* has been remixed for the 25th anniversary of *Monster*. Mike Mills played Kurt's own Jag-Stang on the raw backing track.

JOE SATRIANI
Surfing With The Alien

Satch's landmark album will be re-released for Record Store Day 2019, but with a twist. It features two versions of the record, one with no guitar solos at all…

NILÜFER YANYA
H34T RISES

A remixed version of her *Miss Universe* track *Heat Rises*, the revisited single is accompanied by a video shot around a cityscape in Istanbul.

BIG THIEF
Two Hands

The title track from the band's second LP of 2019, *Two Hands* opens with summery guitars before Adrianne Lenker's ethereal vocal enters, along with breezy percussion.

BEABADOOBEE
Space Cadet

Dirty Hit's latest signing has released her debut EP, *Space Cadet*, with shades of 90s garage rock and shoegaze. Reflective lyrics and moody guitars abound…

CARIBOU
Home

Caribou's latest chillwave anthem is based around a sample of Gloria Barnes' *Home*, with filtered, breakbeat drums and hip-hop-infused guitar lines.

SLEATER-KINNEY
ANIMAL

Released ahead of their 2020 European tour, *ANIMAL* is a rousing, rage-filled song with aggressive, distorted guitars. The vocals were recorded at St. Vincent's home studio.

JULIEN BAKER
Tokyo

Prolific songwriter Julien Baker has released *Tokyo*, her latest offering following a release for Sub Pop's Singles Club. It's accompanied by driving guitars with a mass of emotion.

ANGEL OLSEN
Lark

The opening track from Olsen's orchestral new album *All Mirrors*. Eerie strings open the track before soft, chordal guitar, rising violins and Olsen's strident vocal takes over.

EOB
Santa Teresa

The Radiohead guitar player's first release from his solo venture, *Santa Teresa*, is more akin to Brian Eno than his day job and is full of ambient guitars and dissonance.

VAGABON
Every Woman

The third single from Cameroon-born multi-instrumentalist Laetitia Tamko, aka Vagabon, is a mournfully strummed anthem for those marginalised by society.

BRITTANY HOWARD
History Repeats

Alabama Shakes singer/guitarist Brittany Howard's latest release from her debut solo album *Jaime* has dry rhythm guitars reminiscent of Funkadelic's Eddie Hazel.

WorldMags.net

Lowden
GUITARS

THE GL-10 C

New, lighter body,
chambered for weight relief.

lowdenguitars.com

WorldMags.net

COMPETITION

WIN A MOOER GE300

WORTH £745!

Despite being ubiquitous in the budget-friendly market, Mooer is continuing to set its sights on becoming a major player in the world of digital modelling with the release of the brand new GE300.

This compact multi-effects unit belies the sheer number of features onboard, including a huge array of effects, amps, speaker cabinet models, a third-party impulse-response loader, a looper and even the ability to use Mooer's Tone Capture tech to take a Kemper-esque snapshot of your own equipment.

With 108 amp models and 164 effects, the palette of sounds available (the majority based on Mooer's successful Micro Preamp series) run the full tonal gamut, catering for every stylistic requirement from chimey Fender-style tones to high-gain power.

Given the price-point, the Mooer GE300 is a serious contender in the modern multi-effects market. The sheer number of tonal possibilities means you'll never struggle to achieve the sound you're striving for.

For more information on the GE300, read the full review on p126. To enter the competition, simply head to guitar.com/news/competitions/mooerge300, answer the question below and fill out the form. Good luck!

Where is Mooer's headquarters based?
a) Shenzhen **b)** Beijing **c)** Shanghai

The closing date for this competition is 23:59 BST, 6 November 2019. Good luck!

Terms & Conditions

The closing date is **23:59 BST, 6 November 2019**. The company's decision is final. The competition is open to UK residents only. When entering *Guitar Magazine* competitions, you will be given the option to receive details of future promotions from BandLab UK Limited and related third parties. If you do not want to receive this information, you can opt out. This giveaway is open to over 18s only. For full terms and conditions, please go to bnd.la/gm-ctos.

WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS

THE NEXT-GENERATION PLAYERS & GEAR YOU NEED TO HEAR

AS WE FIND OURSELVES ON THE PRECIPICE OF A BRAND NEW DECADE, IT SEEMS LIKE AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO WONDER WHAT'S NEXT. BUT FOR GUITAR, THE ANSWER IS ALWAYS THE SAME THING – 'EVOLVE'. COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE AS WE CELEBRATE THE NEXT STAGE OF EVOLUTION FOR OUR MUCH-LOVED INSTRUMENT...

WorldMags.net

CONTENTS

22 **REVIEW** MILLIMETRIC INSTRUMENTS MGS2

28 THE NEW BREED: THE YOUNG GUITAR PLAYERS YOU NEED TO HEAR

40 **REVIEW** GIBSON LES PAUL MODERN

44 **REVIEW** RELISH MARY ONE

48 THE NEW WRECKING CREW

56 **REVIEW** BLACKSTAR STANDARD & STEREO DELUXE

60 **REVIEW** UNIVERSAL AUDIO MARSHALL LEGENDS BUNDLE

66 **THE GUITAR INTERVIEW** LUKE WOOD

WorldMags.net

MILLIMETRIC INSTRUMENTS

MGS2

WORDS RICHARD PURVIS

From a Canadian luthier with a background in furniture design, this unique guitar is brimming over with engineering innovations – but what on earth is it going to sound like?

WorldMags.net

Bored with the 20th century conventions of electric guitar design? Point your discerning peepers at the Millimetric Instruments MGS2, a Canadian-built six-string that manages to be at once ultra-chic and fiercely futuristic. We can't decide whether it belongs in a Copenhagen loft apartment or on the set of *Blade Runner*.

WorldMags.net

Founded by Florian Bouyou, who studied graphic design and furniture making before turning his hand to luthiery, Millimetric is all about custom builds – so the guitar in this review isn't actually available to buy and the price we're quoting is a rough guide. UK distributor James' Home Of Tone is your point of contact, and all aspects of the build – from timbers and pickups to the colour of the eco-friendly finish – can be specified by the customer.

The basics, though, are distinctive enough that a Millimetric is never going to be ordinary. Buckle up and we'll run through the specs.

Actually, we'll start with the hard case, which is made by Canadian firm Nanuk and appears to have been designed for the safe storage of nuclear waste. It's very tough indeed, robust enough to fly with and comes complete with casters – which is just as well because, while the guitar itself weighs less than 3kg, the case is over 10kg.

WorldMags.net

Our review instrument's black walnut body and neck (with a separate fingerboard that's also black walnut) have a pleasing satin finish and the flat-backed body tapers to an audaciously thin edge on all sides. The rear panel is transparent so you can see the minimal electrics, while the scratchplate is made of brushed acrylic, with a subtle 'M' logo just above the fixed bridge.

That bridge is a Millimetric original, and its most striking feature is that the saddles are brass grub screws with notches for the strings. It's a simple system, but an effective one – string pressure keeps the screws in place and action adjustments are easy. It feels absolutely solid and has clearly been engineered with supreme attention to detail.

Those screws are matched by the markers on the volume and tone knobs and the same brass finish is found on the barrel-shaped pickups. These are described as a hybrid of Danelectro-style lipstick and Strat-style single-coils and they're mounted to the guard by flush hex screws.

That's about it for the body… oh, but what about strap buttons? Don't we get any? Um, no, but that doesn't mean you have to play this guitar sitting down: the mounts for the included strap locks are recessed within the guitar, so as to avoid spoiling that oh-so-elegant silhouette.

The 25.5-inch-scale neck is attached by four bolts, with a neatly carved heel, but this is arguably as much a through-body design as it is a bolt-on: the rear part of the neck carries on for so long beyond the fretboard that the strings are anchored in it rather than the body. It's a skinny neck, with perfectly finished frets that end about a millimetre short of the edges: enough to keep things slick, but not so much that you'll fall off when you go for big vibrato on either E string. Note also the fret markers, which are super-discreet but still clearly visible from above.

Then we move, via a Tusq nut at the front and a bold volute at the back, to that Travis Bean-style headstock. As well as looking cool, this allows for easy access to the truss rod… although it does mean you can see a bit of unfinished wood around the end of the rod. Hipshot tuners with custom buttons complete the build, and now it's time to stop gazing in awe and have a play.

IN USE

For all its bold design elements, the MGS2 is fundamentally a lightweight single-cutaway guitar, so there's nothing radical about the playing experience. There are no issues with ergonomics to get used to – in that sense, it's actually more 'traditional' than a Flying V – and it quickly feels as familiar in the hands as any Telecaster. Factory setup, as you'd expect at this price point, is immaculate, and those ultra-smooth frets lend themselves to effortless fast fingering.

The acoustic tone is breezy enough in the top end and has bags of woody resonance; but while the amp's warming up, we find ourselves wondering what an instrument that looks like this is actually supposed to sound like. What is the tonal equivalent of a designer spaceship?

The answer is, a lot less daring than you might expect. If there's one word to sum up the sound of

PREVIOUS PAGE The neck is a bolt-on, but it extends so far into the body that the strings are anchored in it

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP Brass grub screw markers on the volume and tone knobs mirror the bridge saddles

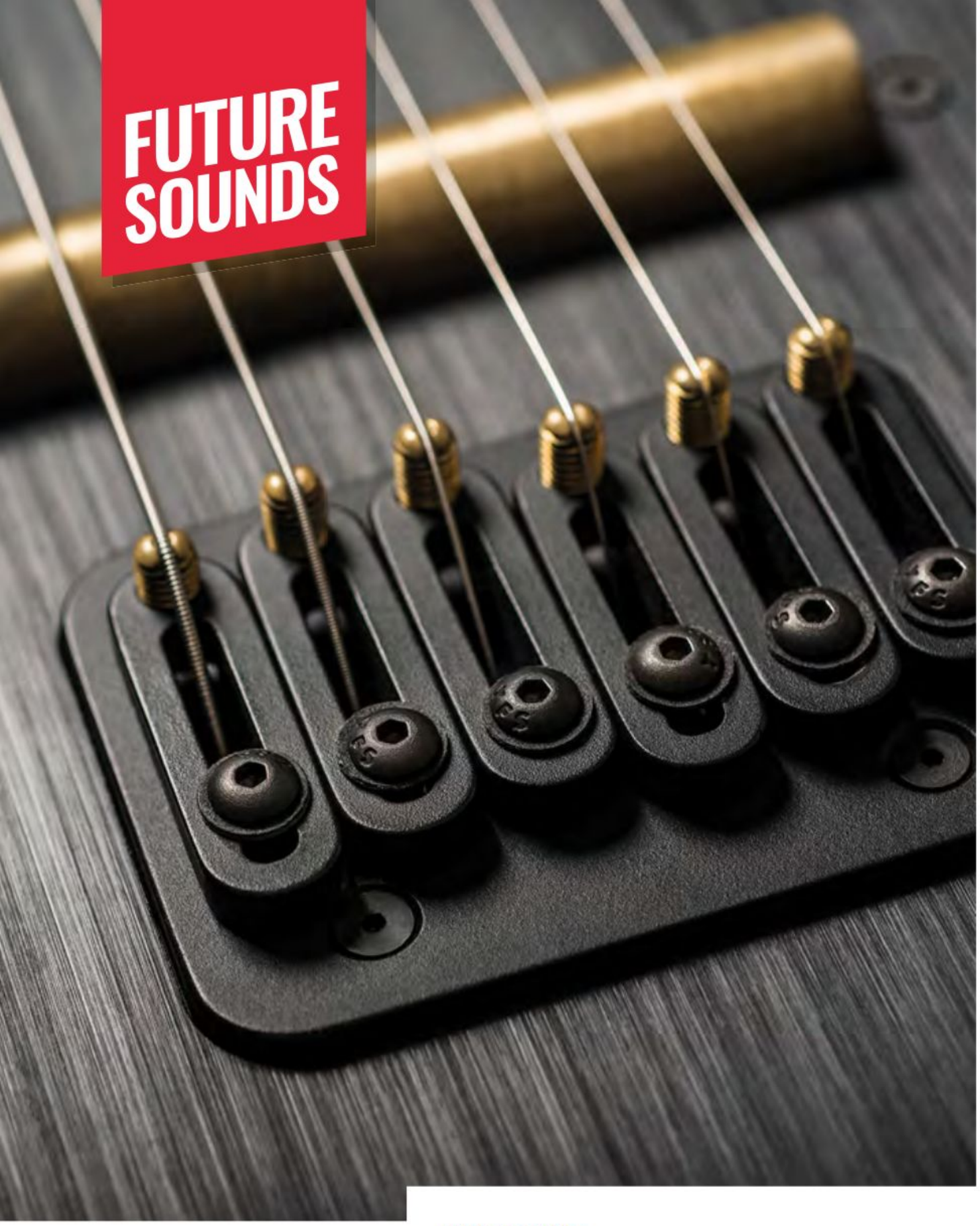
OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM The 12" radius black walnut fingerboard has 22 jumbo frets and the neck has a 25.5" scale

ABOVE The headstock has Hipshot tuners with custom buttons and looks suitably retrofuturistic

ABOVE LEFT The pickups are described as a hybrid of Danelectro-style lipstick and Strat-style single-coils

LEFT The minimal electrics are on display around the back

WorldMags.net



TOP Millimetric's striking fixed bridge design – the saddles are brass grub screws, with notches for the strings

ABOVE RIGHT The black walnut body has slender contours on all sides

BELOW RIGHT The case, made by Canadian firm Nanuk, is one of the sturdiest we've seen

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £2,500 (guide price, inc hard case)
DESCRIPTION Solidbody single-cutaway guitar. Made in Canada
BUILD Black walnut body and bolt-on/through neck, 12" radius black walnut fingerboard with 22 jumbo frets
HARDWARE Hipshot tuners, Millimetric fixed bridge
ELECTRICS Millimetric MMLS single-coil pickups, three-way switch, master volume and tone controls
SCALE LENGTH 25.5"/648mm
NECK WIDTH 42mm at nut, 52.4mm at 12th fret
NECK DEPTH 20mm at first fret, 21mm at 12th fret
STRING SPACING 34mm at nut, 52mm at bridge
WEIGHT 2.8kg/6.2lb
FINISH Milk-based or water-based paint, any colour available on request
LEFT-HANDERS Yes, at no extra cost
CONTACT James' Home Of Tone homeoftone.co.uk
millimetric.ca

9/10 **A strangely desirable mix of ultra-hip design and retro tone**

this guitar, it's 'twang'. Well, we are dealing with single-coil pickups and a Fender scale length, so while the mismatch between sci-fi looks and retro tones is perhaps slightly jarring, it shouldn't be a surprise.

On the bridge pickup especially, the MGS2 delivers a snappiness that is, as promised, halfway between Danelectro and Strat – with some added Rickenbacker 6-series thrown in. The middle setting ups the cheeky cluck factor still further on the wound strings, leaving us reaching for a Bigsby… except a Bigsby on this thing would look as ridiculous as gas headlamps on a Tesla.

Things stay bright and lightweight on the neck pickup, which is all about clean precision rather than jazzy soulfulness, although it's worth noting that in all three positions the volume and tone controls are more useful than most when it comes to making subtle adjustments that don't kill the whole character of the guitar.

All that natural zing does mean things can get a little wiry with heavy distortion – hard rockers might prefer to specify humbuckers – but our MGS2 gets on fine with a bit of mid-gain overdrive.

In truth, the least versatile aspect of this guitar is perhaps its potentially divisive appearance: yeah, you probably could play New York punk, Nashville country or Chicago blues with it… if your bandmates will let you! ***G***

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

The Tao Guitar **€14,000**, Hartung Caligo **$4,895**, Obstructures 0.750b **$2,450**

WorldMags.net

CODAMUSIC

Fender Custom Shop

WHEN YOU'RE READY

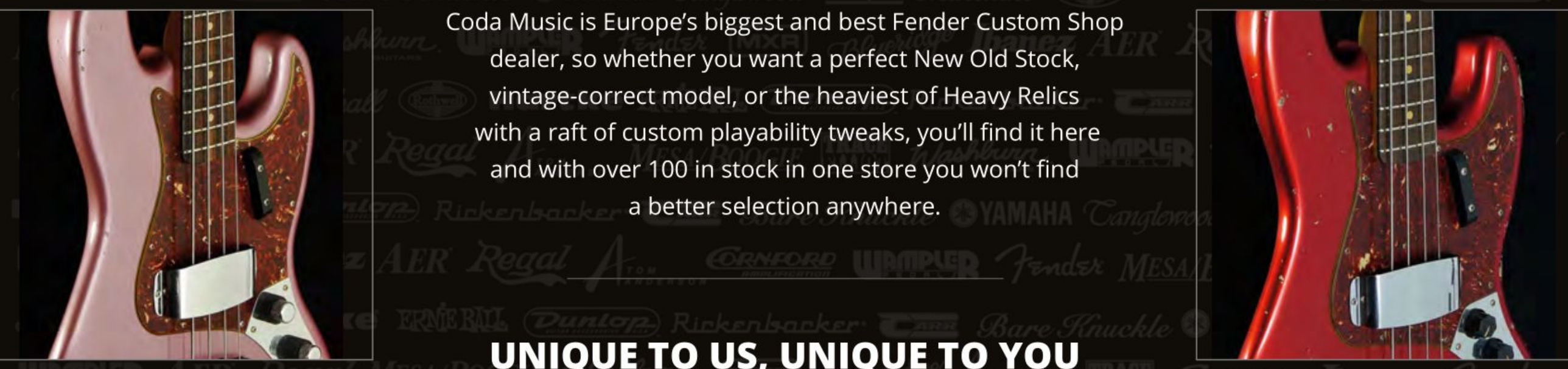
A Custom Shop guitar embodies everything Fender has learned over 60 years of building the world's most revered electric solidbodies. The finest materials, all the right details, handbuilt in Corona, California – it's the guitar of your dreams, realised.

WE HAVE THE GUITAR FOR YOU

Coda Music is Europe's biggest and best Fender Custom Shop dealer, so whether you want a perfect New Old Stock, vintage-correct model, or the heaviest of Heavy Relics with a raft of custom playability tweaks, you'll find it here and with over 100 in stock in one store you won't find a better selection anywhere.

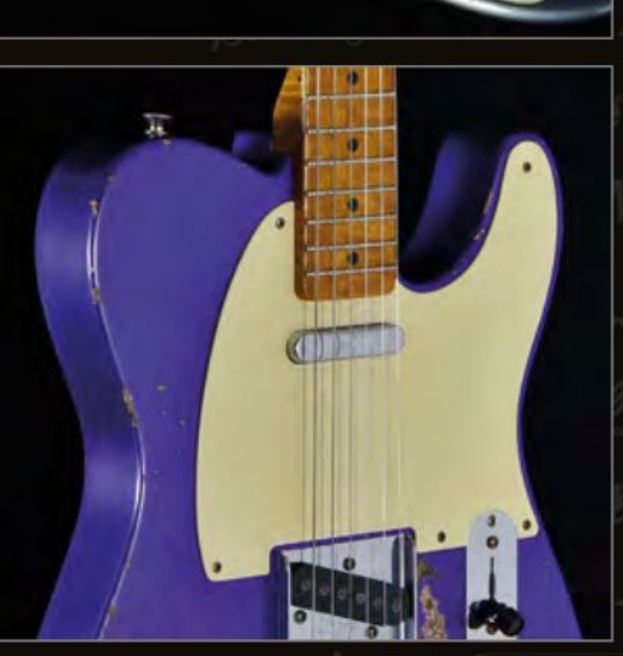
UNIQUE TO US, UNIQUE TO YOU

Our extensive in-store stock includes many custom ordered guitars, built to our own exacting specs after years of buying, selling and playing these fabulous instruments.



CAN WE BUILD IT?

Yes we can! If you have that extra special something in mind, we can work with you to make it a reality. Custom orders can be ready in a matter of months and cost less than you might think – call us, email us or drop in to discuss your perfect combination of features.



www.coda-music.com

51a High Street, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 3AH t : 01438 350 815 e : stevenage@coda-music.co.uk
Acoustic Centre 27b Church Lane, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 3QW t: 01438 350815 e: acoustics@coda-music.com

WorldMags.net

Instant decision 9 months 0% finance
available on all new products over £300 on our website

FUTURE SOUNDS

THE NEW BREED

THE GUITAR IS NOT OVER.

WORDS JOSH GARDNER

"The guitar is dead!" The chances are, you've heard that phrase over the last few years. It seems that barely a month passes without a celebrity or mainstream news outlet reading the last rites to the humble six-string.

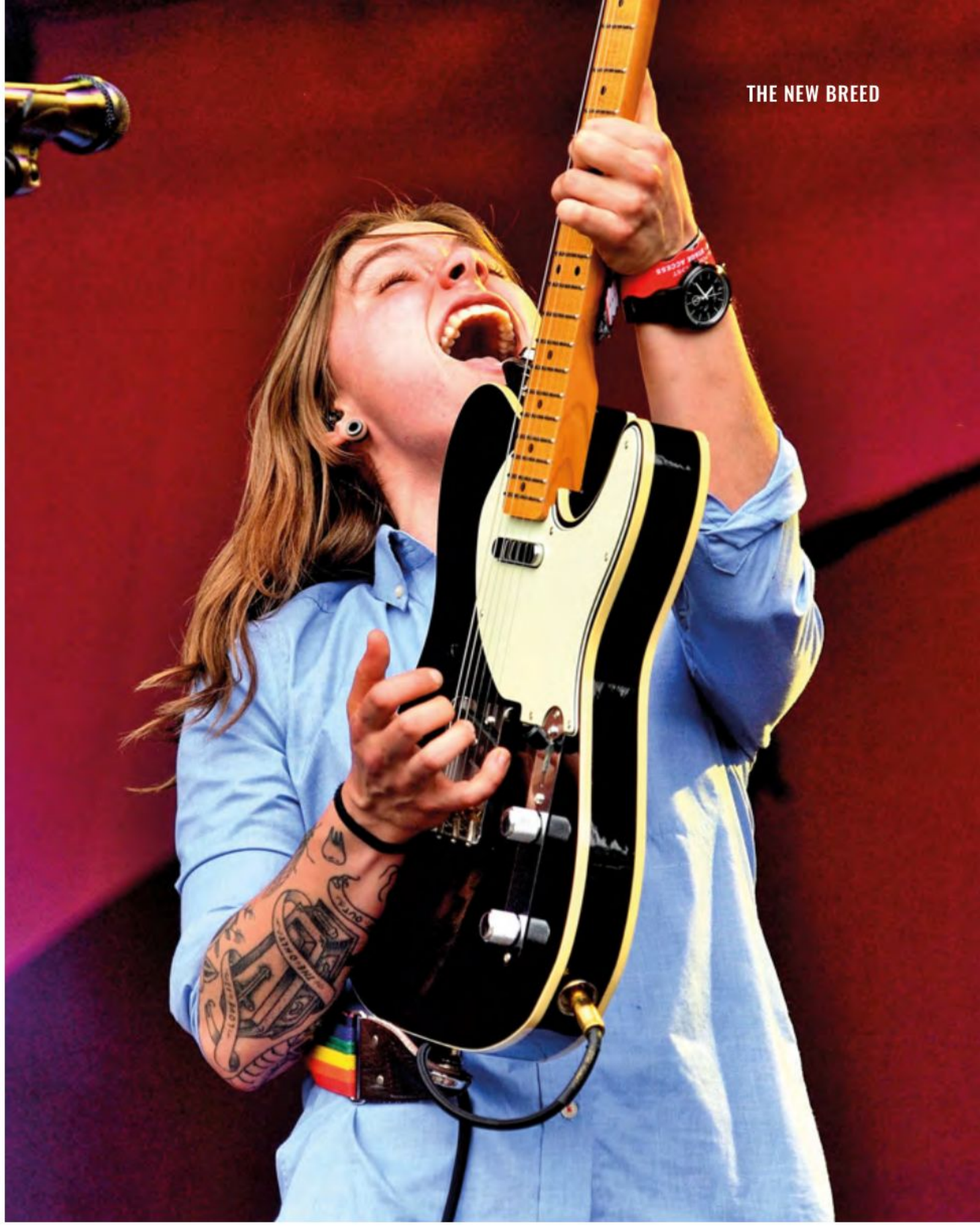
You've probably also read some of these articles. In 2017, The Washington Post broke the news of "The slow, secret death of the six-string electric," while The Independent last year proclaimed: "The electric guitar itself appears to be facing an existential threat." Even Eric Clapton has had a go, musing in 2017 that, "maybe the guitar is over…"

In reality, the guitar has simply done what the guitar has always done – evolved. From Robert Johnson to The Beatles, Led Zeppelin to Nirvana, Oasis to John Mayer, the guitar has remained the defining tool of popular music over the last 100 years because of its chameleonic ability to change with the trends.

By way of evidence, we present The New Breed – 35 diverse young musicians who represent the most exciting new talent in guitar. Some are boundary-pushing virtuosos, or sonic experimentalists planting the flag in new genres. Others are operating in spaces where in the past, they've not always been welcome.

The guitar is not dead – in fact, the guitar is thriving. Read on to discover what a wonderful six-string world The New Breed are building…

WorldMags.net



OMAR APOLLO

First-generation Mexican-American guitarist and songwriter Omar Apollo (aka Omar Velasco) is an example of the broad and interesting church that guitar has become as we move into the 2020s. Apollo's music effortlessly fuses blues, jazz, R&B and Latin elements to create a compelling laid-back pop brew. But at the heart of it all is guitar – listen to *Ugotme* and bask in the languid Strat chord stabs and bluesy meandering lead lines that provide a bedrock to his breakout Spotify hit.

LISTEN TO Omar Apollo – *Ugotme*

MATEUS ASATO

Brazillian guitar-slinger Asato has attained guitar stardom in a way that would never have been possible even a few years ago. After all, this is a guy who's got nearly a million followers on Instagram, 335,000 YouTube subscribers and a signature guitar from US boutique legend Suhr… and yet he's never even released an album? Well, that's what happens when the power of social media meets one of the most impressive virtuosos of his generation.

Upon moving to Los Angeles from his native Brazil to attend the Musician's Institute in 2013, Asato started using Instagram to document what he was learning at the respected school. His unusual knack for melody and musicality in his one-minute instrumental pieces – not to mention his bluesy pop-tinged style – soon set Mateus apart from the Instagram guitar crowd, and in a few short years, he'd become a bona-fide guitar phenomenon.

Since then, Matteus has become a renowned clinician and in-demand guitarist for hire, touring with *American Idol* star Tori Kelly and UK singer-songwriter Jessie J, he's also earned some high-profile fans, with no less than John Mayer describing him as "one of the best guitar players around".

LISTEN TO Mateus Asato – *Change*

JULIEN BAKER

When then 22-year-old Tennessean Julien Baker released her second album, 2017's *Turn Out The Lights*, it was the signal that a truly special talent had emerged. Blending brutally honest songwriting, ethereal harmonies and delicately beautiful guitar work into a potent brew that straddles the genres of indie-rock, folk and country, Baker's music effortlessly demonstrates the enduring power of raw, honest guitar playing.

LISTEN TO Julien Baker – *Appointments*

TOM BROOKE

If there's one critique that you could make about much of the guitar music that's taking over airwaves in 2019, it's that it's a little clean. Enter Finnish math-rock duo NYOS, who wave the flag for noisy, angular, rule-breaking guitar like it's some kind of weapon. Guitarist Tom Brooke shoulders the full melodic weight of NYOS with finger-bending

ABOVE LEFT John Mayer describes Mateus Asato as "one of the best guitar players around"

ABOVE Julien Baker has worked with Lucy Dacus and Phoebe Bridgers as part of boygenius, and is busy making her third solo record

Images © Getty Images

WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS

ABOVE Phoebe Bridgers' use of baritone electric underpins her distinctive songwriting

ABOVE RIGHT Tyler Bryant channels years of gigging experience into his muscular, riff-packed blues-rock

RIGHT Daniel Donato may only be 20, but he's already one of Nashville's standout guitar players

arpeggios, loopers aplenty and seemingly endless scuzzily distorted guitar riffs.

LISTEN TO NYOS – ***Mutante***

PHOEBE BRIDGERS

'Making baritone guitar cool again' might not have been an accolade that outrageously talented singer, songwriter and guitarist Phoebe Bridgers was actively seeking, but her use of a Danelectro '56 on her remarkable 2017 debut album, *Stranger In The Alps*, was a pointed reminder that long-scale guitars can do more than just metal.

"I love – love – open-tuned baritone guitar. It's perfect for how I write – it makes everything sound so sad! But it takes it out of the singer-songwriter world," she told us last year. Her precocious gifts for writing and arranging no doubt play the biggest part, but there can be little doubt that her choice of instrument is a significant factor in why Bridgers' music sounds so different from the singer-songwriter crowd and marks her out as one of the most exciting figures in guitar music.

LISTEN TO Phoebe Bridgers – ***Smoke Signals***

TYLER BRYANT

Tyler Bryant's story sounds like something out of a movie. When still in elementary school, Bryant met Roosevelt Twitty – a sexagenarian blues musician from Paris, Texas, not far from Bryant's home in Honey Grove. Twitty set about teaching young Tyler to play the blues and, by the time the boy was 13, they were playing shows together around Texas. Perhaps that's why Bryant melds blues and hard-rock so authentically and tastefully – the 29-year-old has been immersed in it longer than veterans twice his age.

LISTEN TO Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown – ***On To The Next***

MAC DEMARCO

The self-styled practitioner of 'jizz rock' might have a reputation for his droll sense of humour and a penchant for having a good time both on and off the stage; but don't let DeMarco's eccentric personality detract from his abilities as a guitar player. The Canadian's chorus-drenched clean guitar lines are inventive as they are hooky, smashing together yacht-rock and indie-rock to create a headily lo-fi brew.

LISTEN TO Mac DeMarco – ***Freaking Out The Neighborhood***

DANIEL DONATO

If you want to walk onto Nashville's famous Broadway holding a Telecaster, you better have your

All Images © Getty Images except Phoebe Bridgers © Eleanor Jane

WorldMags.net

ABOVE LEFT Melanie Faye's mercurial approach to guitar is technically impressive and emotionally expressive

ABOVE Manuel Gagneux's varied playing in Zeal & Ardor combines "slave spirituals with harsher elements"

LEFT Adam Hann's guitar work in The 1975 ranges from super-clean 80s rhythm to effects-laden experimentation

chops in order, because otherwise everyone and their grandma (literally) on that street will leave you in the dust. So when a teenage Daniel Donato saw the Don Kelley Band performing there – the legendary working band that spawned Brent Mason and Johnny Hiland – and declared he'd found the band he wanted to join. Two years of badgering and woodshedding later, and Donato earned his way in. Still only 20, Donato has since struck out on his own and established himself as one of the most in-demand players in Nashville.

LISTEN TO Daniel Donato – ***Always Been A Lover***

MELANIE FAYE

Not too many players have been fêted by everyone from John Mayer to Quincy Jones before their 21st birthday, and certainly not described as "the anointed one" by Mateus Asato, but Alabama-born neo-soul artist Melanie Faye is not your average Instagram guitarist. With a silky smooth hybrid-picking style blended with some ferocious bluesy lead chops, Faye has already become an in-demand teacher and touring player, most recently hitting the road with Willow Smith.

LISTEN TO Melanie Faye – ***Eternally 12***

SAM FENDER

The North Shields lad is understandably fed up with being described as the 'Geordie Springsteen' by lazy journalists, but while Fender might share The Boss's knack for storytelling, the 25-year-old is his own man. His debut album, *Hypersonic Missiles*, went straight to No.1 in the UK and its mix of intricately chiming 80s guitar lines and driving, euphoric choruses marks him out for big things indeed.

LISTEN TO Sam Fender – ***The Borders***

MANUEL GAGNEUX

Swedish avant-garde metal collective Zeal & Ardor fuse the seemingly disparate ingredients of post-rock, technical metal and African-American spirituals. In less capable hands that almost certainly wouldn't work – but bandleader Manuel Gagneux is no ordinary guitar player. Somehow blending towering, reverb-drenched arpeggios, thundering metal riffs and traditional work songs, Gagneux is one of the most unique musicians working today.

LISTEN TO Zeal & Ardor – ***Come On Down***

ADAM HANN

The 1975's frontman Matt Healy is one of the most outspoken and charismatic figures in pop, so perhaps it should be no surprise that the band's prodigiously talented lead guitarist Adam Hann doesn't seem to get much attention, despite being in one of the biggest outfits on the planet. But a closer listen to their varied back catalogue demonstrates the remarkably chameleonic nature of Hann's guitar playing – from intricate guitar-pop to angular 80s neo-soul to abrasive lo-fi punk, he can inhabit them

Images © Getty Images

WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS

ABOVE Greta Van Fleet's Jake Kiszka keeps the flame of classic rock guitar burning

ABOVE RIGHT Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram has been called the next big thing by Gary Clark Jr and Eric Gales, and also performed on the Marvel TV series, *Luke Cage*

Jake Kiszka © Getty Images

all, while always sounding uniquely like himself.
LISTEN TO The 1975 – ***Love Me***

CHRISTONE INGRAM

In the space of a fortnight last year, this publication asked modern blues titans Gary Clark Jr and Eric Gales the same question – who's the next big thing? The answer in both cases was just one word: 'Kingfish'. Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram grew up in the blues heartland of Mississippi and from his earliest days, the 20-year-old has been determined to keep the tradition alive and bring the music to a new generation.

Ingram's talent attracted attention almost immediately and quickly saw him marked out for big things – he played his first gig at 11 and was playing for the Obamas at the White House by the time he was 15 – but unlike so many guitar prodigies, Ingram hasn't stagnated, instead continuing to develop his tone, technique and feel. "I play more tastefully now," he told us. "I was getting a lot of, 'Man, you're good, but you need to slow down.' Even players who played fast were telling me to slow down! You can never stop learning, so I took their knowledge and applied it to what I do."
LISTEN TO Kingfish – ***Fresh Out***

LINDSEY JORDAN

The 20-year-old Maryland singer-songwriter better known as Snail Mail has been making waves since she burst onto the scene as a precocious 16-year-old with a Jaguar in her hand and an EP stuffed with 90s indie-rock guitar hooks. Her talent for emotionally resonant songwriting and fiery grunge-pop solos came to the fore on her acclaimed debut album, *Lush*, marking out Jordan as a hugely exciting new presence in indie-rock.
LISTEN TO Snail Mail – ***Heat Wave***

MARCUS KING

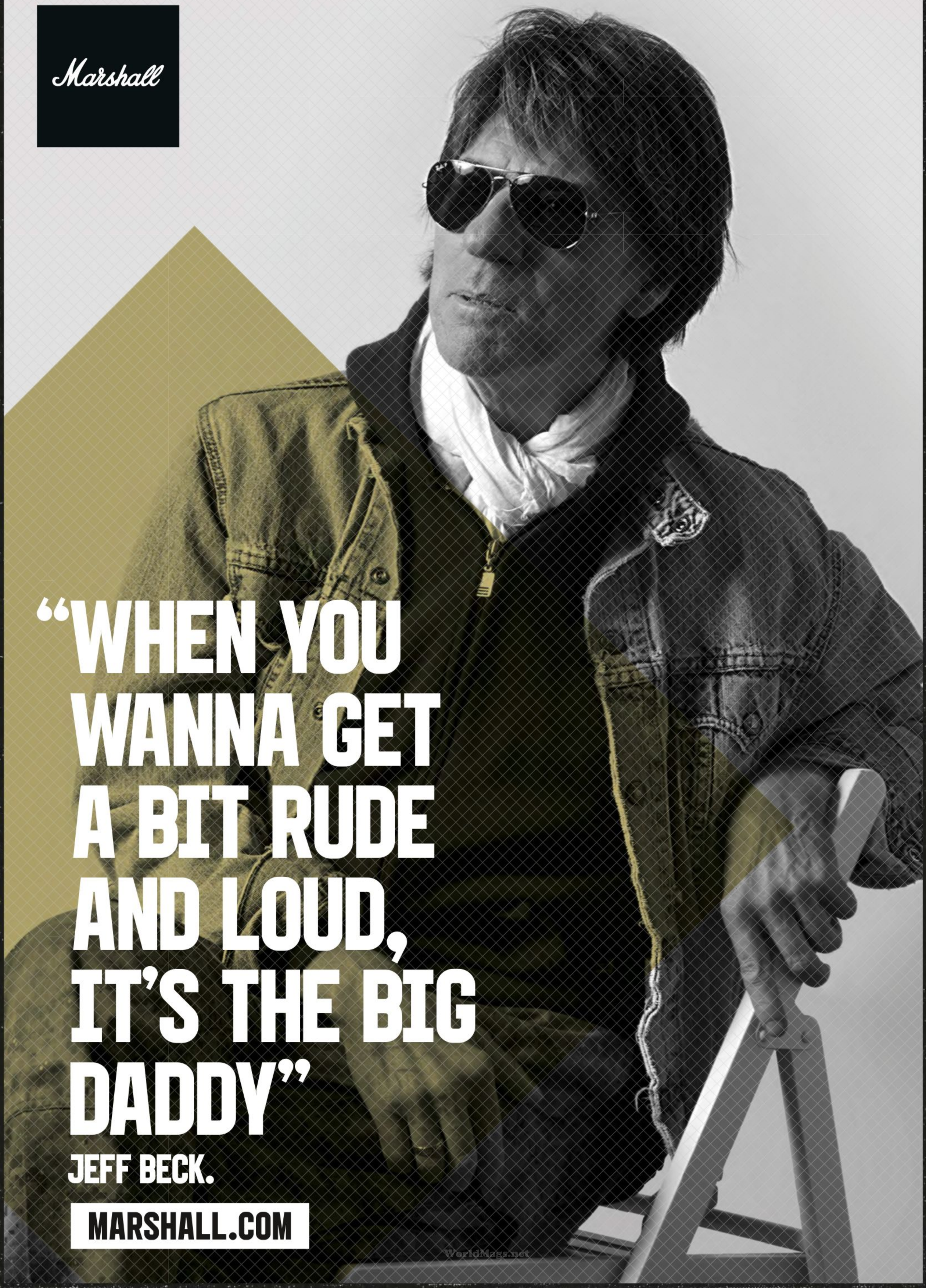
If you want to be a hot-shot guitarist, having a father who's a respected bluesman in his own right isn't going to do you any harm – just ask Marcus King. He was going out gigging with his dad, Marvin, before he was even a teenager, helping the young musician to hone his talents into one of the most exciting, soulful young blues guitarists out there. Still just 23 years old, Marcus looks like he's ready to step up to the next level – a signature Gibson ES-345 model was launched in October and in January 2020, he'll release his debut solo album, produced by none other than Dan Auerbach, and backed up by his all-star Easy Eye Sound band.
LISTEN TO The Marcus King Band – ***8 A.M.***

JAKE KISZKA

Greta Van Fleet might get prickly when you compare them to Led Zeppelin, but given how rapidly the Michigan four-piece have exploded into the mainstream, it's not just Josh Kiszka's Plant-esque wail that they have in common. SG-toting 23-year-old guitarist Jake is the secret sauce in the GVF gumbo – blending bluesy feel, Southern-rock sizzle and yes, plenty of Pageisms, to create a wonderfully authentic classic-rock brew.
LISTEN TO Greta Van Fleet – ***When The Curtain Falls***

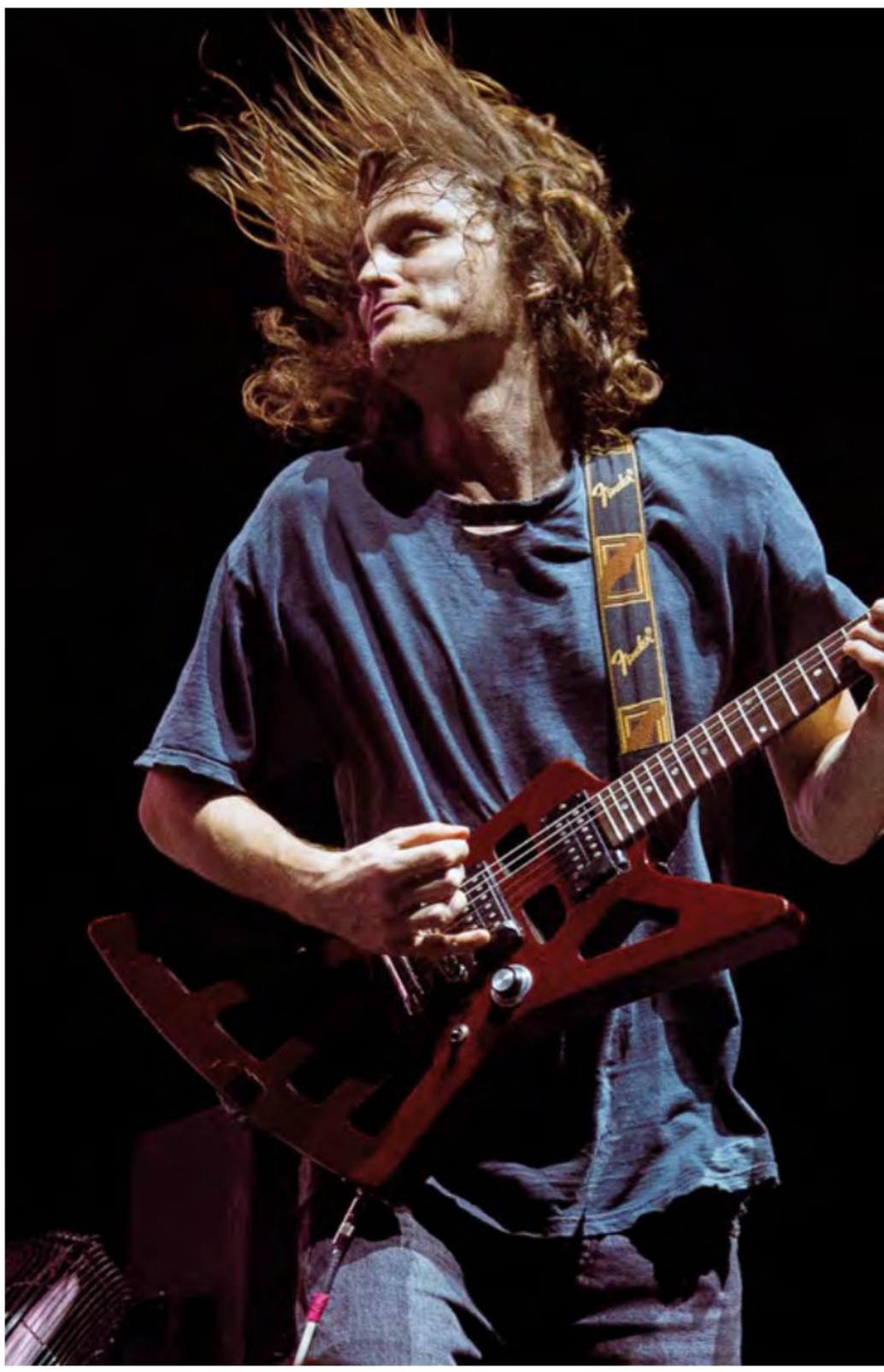
WorldMags.net

Marshall



WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS



ABOVE Larkin Poe singer-guitarist Rebecca Lovell provides the bedrock for sister Megan's scintillating lap-steel playing

ABOVE RIGHT King Gizzard's Stu Mackenzie combines everything from surf-rock to psychedelia into his sound

RIGHT Joey Landreth's rootsy, soulful music showcases his expressive, dynamic take on slide playing

BEA KRISTI

Filipino-British songwriter Beabadoobee (aka Bea Kristi) first signalled her songwriting talent at the age of 16, when a fan uploaded her song *Coffee* to YouTube, and it quickly went viral. She was snapped up by indie-pop kingmakers Dirty Hit, and in the two years since has honed her sound away from the standard acoustic singer-songwriter fare, pulling in a trove of grungey guitar influences and picking up a Mustang to create languid grunge-pop tunes that sound like they're beamed straight from 1995.

LISTEN TO **Beabadoobee – *I Wish I Was Stephen Malkmus***

STEVE LACY

Lacy came to prominence as part of Grammy-nominated R&B act The Internet, but has since struck out on his own, working with everyone from Kendrick Lamar to Vampire Weekend. The 21-year-old's interest in the electric guitar started in perhaps the most Millennial way possible – thanks to *Guitar Hero* – but he soon graduated to a real one. Fans of smooth, lo-fi jams and hip-hop beats should be extremely glad he did…

LISTEN TO **Steve Lacy – *Lay Me Down***

JOEY LANDRETH

Listening to Joey Landreth's wonderfully expressive electric slide work, you'd be forgiven for thinking that he was born with a bottleneck on his ring finger, but in fact the Bros. Landreth guitarist didn't start playing slide until his early 20s – thinking that guitar legend Sonny (who Joey says is possibly a very distant relation) already had the 'slide playing Landreth' thing sewn up. Now, whenever Joey picks up a slide and cuts loose, there's no doubt there's room for more than one slide genius with that name…

LISTEN TO **The Bros. Landreth – *Good Love***

REBECCA LOVELL

The guitar-playing credentials of Larkin Poe's Jazzmaster-toting frontwoman Rebecca Lovell sometimes get overshadowed (understandably) by the kinetic, driving lap-steel playing of her sister Megan. But it'd be a mistake to sleep on the younger Lovell's chops – the scuzzy Southern-fried riffs she lays down provide a fabulous counterpoint to the

All Images © Getty Images

WorldMags.net

searing slide, elevating the whole Larkin Poe sound to another level.

LISTEN TO Larkin Poe – ***Bleach Blonde Bottle Blues***

STU MACKENZIE

The only thing certain about Aussie experimentalists King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard is you can never be sure what to expect from them. Surf, folk, psych, metal, jazz… it seems there's no genre that guitarist and bandleader Stu Mackenzie won't smash together in a wildly creative fashion, with his versatile chops holding the whole freewheeling edifice together.

LISTEN TO King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard – ***Robot Stop***

BLAKE MILLS

If you were a Grammy-nominated producer who's worked with everyone from Alabama Shakes to John Legend, you'd probably be happy with that, right? Well, Blake Mills seems determined to make even the most industrious of us feel inadequate, by also demonstrating that he's a fine songwriter and singer who's in demand as both a deft acoustic fingerstylist and wonderfully melodic electric player.

LISTEN TO Blake Mills – ***Hey Lover***

TOM MISCH

A 24-year-old bedroom guitarist and SoundCloud producer whose debut album hit the Top 10 in the UK charts despite him not even having signed to a record label? Tom Misch's route to stardom hasn't been a conventional one and despite him being one of the most talked-about artists in his homeland, the Dulwich product doesn't seem to be enamoured by fame, telling us earlier this year that, "I don't want to be massive, I feel like I'm already pretty big, y'know?"

He might not have much of a choice in the matter if he keeps making records like *Geography*, an album that fuses pop, soul and R&B with his wonderfully smooth and expressive jazz-guitar style that owes a debt to the modern explosion of the internet guitar player: "I'm mostly influenced by YouTubers, actually," he explains. "I love Erick Walls, he's left-handed but plays right-handed guitar. He shreds, but in a soulful, bluesy, gospel style. I also like Isaiah Sharkey who plays for D'Angelo and Jairus Mozee. I love R&B guitarists who have come out of church with that gospel influence."

LISTEN TO Tom Misch – ***South Of The River***

DAVEY NEWINGTON

Boy Azooga's remarkably refined debut album, *1, 2, Kung Fu!*, feels like an 11-track residency inside Davey Newington's head. And what a compellingly unique place it is, too – mashing up funk, soul, classic rock, pop and world music into a giant psychedelic smoothie, with Newington delivering hook after hummable hook along the way.

Newington has earned himself some famous fans, too, with Neil Young, Bob Dylan and both Gallagher

ABOVE LEFT Blake Mills is a multi-talented singer-songwriter and producer as well as being a mean fingerstyle and electric player

ABOVE Pop, soul, R&B and jazz collide in the chameleonic fretwork of UK star Tom Misch

Tom Misch © Eleanor Jane

WorldMags.net

Focus on your passion.
Knowing nothing will get in your way.

No endless string changes

No retuning headaches

No rough feel from sweaty hands

No dead sounding strings

…even after hours and hours of playing.

Once you've played them,
there's no looking back.

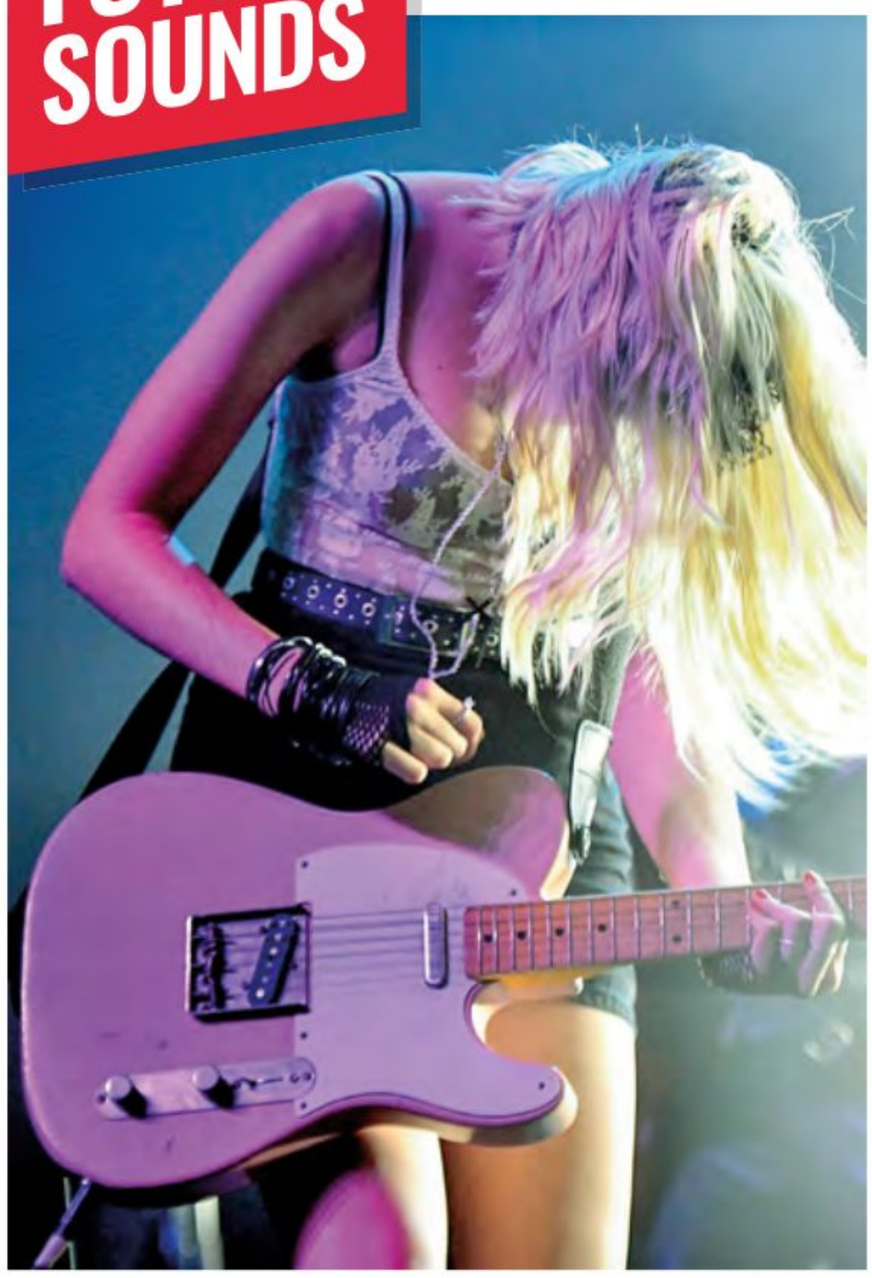
Elixir® STRINGS

GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE™

WorldMags.net

GORE, Elixir, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, OPTIWEB, great tone-long life, "e" icon and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. © 1997-2018 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

FUTURE SOUNDS



TOP Lydia Night is the vocalist and rhythm guitarist in a number of bands, including US punks The Regrettes

ABOVE Kentuckian Ian Noe creates country folk in the lineage of John Prine

ABOVE RIGHT Les Paul-toting Jared James Nichols plays fierce blues-rock without a pick

brothers tagging Boy Azooga for support slots in the last year.

LISTEN TO Boy Azooga – ***Loner Boogie***

JARED JAMES NICHOLS

The world is not short of blues-rock guitar players – and with so much competition out there, it can be hard for even the most talented musicians to stand out, but Jared James Nichols has never had a problem being noticed. For the last decade, the 30-year-old Wisconsinite has been turning heads and pricking ears with his leonine locks, incendiary rock chops, unconventional technique and unique gear choices.

Key to what makes Nichols so unique as a rock-guitar player is that he plays exclusively with his fingers, never with a pick, giving a distinctive percussive and kinetic attack. And then there's his gear – the guitarist's Epiphone signature model has proved a crossover hit thanks to the simplicity of its jet-black finish, wrapover bridge and single dog-ear P-90. "There's something magical about that pickup," he told us. "Yeah, it's loud and it buzzes, but when it's on, it's on. They're just so individual-sounding."

LISTEN TO Jared James Nichols – ***Don't Be Scared***

LYDIA NIGHT

Not many people play South By Southwest when they're 12 years old, but then when you start an all-girl punk duo with your eight-year-old drummer friend, you're not the average aspiring rock star. And so it should be no surprise that Lydia Night, still just 19 and now frontwoman of The Regrettes, is still tearing up the punk-rock rulebook – smuggling angry, unapologetic socially conscious messages into infectiously catchy hook-laden two-guitar jams, ably aided by lead guitarist Genessa Gariano.

LISTEN TO The Regrettes – ***Seashore***

IAN NOE

It's often said that the best communicators don't waste their words, and 29-year-old Kentuckian Ian Noe isn't one to overshare – he lets his spellbinding songs do the talking for him instead. Heavily influenced by legendary country-folk guitarist John Prine, Noe's intricate fingerstyle provides the perfect bedrock to his wonderful, heartfelt vignettes of smalltown America.

LISTEN TO Ian Noe – ***Between The Country***

Images © Getty Images except Ian Noe © Eleanor Jane

WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS

ABOVE Grammy winner Isaiah Sharkey is John Mayer's touring guitar partner

ABOVE TOP Kevin Parker's kaleidoscopic retro sound and inventive studio work have propelled Tame Impala to stardom

ABOVE RIGHT Molly Tuttle is a phenomenally talented bluegrass player

KEVIN PARKER

Tame Impala was always intended to be Kevin Parker's way of pushing himself out of his guitar comfort zone, with his studio work intentionally using effects pedals and studio gear in unconventional ways to send him down interesting and progressive avenues. 12 years later, Parker's desire to experiment and explore the psychedelic hinterland shows no signs of stopping.

LISTEN TO Tame Impala – *Elephant*

PLINI ROESSLER-HOLGATE

"When I saw Plini play, I felt that the future of exceptional guitar playing was secure." When those words came from the mouth of none other than Steve Vai, it's fair to say the instrumental guitar world took notice of Plini Roessler-Holgate. Since then, the 27-year-old Australian has just kept on demonstrating his remarkable technique and palpable knack for melodic composition via his increasingly ambitious prog-rock opuses.

LISTEN TO Plini – *Electric Sunrise*

ISAIAH SHARKEY

It takes some chops to go on stage and trade licks with John Mayer every night, but Isaiah Sharkey is clearly a player who knows exactly what he's doing. After all, the 30-year-old has been playing Chicago's jazz and blues clubs since he was 14 years old, and won a Grammy for his work on D'Angelo's 2014 comeback album, *Black Messiah*.

"I try to give him his space so that he can be free to either play or not play guitar – my goal is to never be in his way," he told us of his tours with Mayer, which he fits in around his solo work and teaching. "But he's

Images © Getty Images

WorldMags.net

like, 'Man, no, play! Play out! I know you know the parts, so just have fun with it, do your thing!'"
LISTEN TO Isaiah Sharkey – ***In Case***

MOLLY TUTTLE

Molly Tuttle is one of those guitar players that has to be seen to be believed. Hearing her remarkably dextrous and fluid picking is impressive in itself, of course, but it's when you watch her play and see the way her right hand effortlessly and fluidly moves across the guitar – whether she's flat-picking, cross-picking or playing clawhammer – that you come to understand why the 26-year-old Californian has become one of the most in-demand names in Nashville, and one of the hottest stars on the bluegrass scene.
LISTEN TO Molly Tuttle – ***When You're Ready***

JACKIE VENSON

Austin hasn't exactly had a bad record when it comes to producing world-class guitar players – just think of Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Johnson or Gary Clark Jr, for example. Jackie Venson might just be the next name to add to that esteemed list. Despite attending the acclaimed Berklee College of Music, Venson didn't pick up a guitar until her final year in 2010. Since then, she's developed a wonderfully lyrical bluesy style, her fuzzed-up Strat tones and infectious character making her a star of the Instagram guitar scene.
LISTEN TO Jackie Venson – ***Next Life***

PHUM VIPHURIT

It's a good job that when Phum Viphurit was a kid, his parents stopped him from playing the drums because it was disturbing the neighbours and got him a guitar instead. The nearly 50 million YouTube views of his funky, woozy-tremolo drenched hit *Lover Boy* can attest to that. With Strat in hand, the 24-year-old has become one of the leading lights in Asia's neo-soul movement and is an artist with genuine global aspirations.
LISTEN TO Phum Viphurit – ***Lover Boy***

HARRISON WHITFORD

Whitford is best known as the lead guitar foil to Phoebe Bridgers, but his solo work shows off the full palette of his remarkably inventive guitar playing, blending the atmospheric esoteric touches that he uses to such great effect in his day job with some restrained country-tinged acoustic work and powerful electrified moments.
LISTEN TO Harrison Whitford – ***Take A Walk***

YVETTE YOUNG

Like many kids, Yvette Young found herself turned off from music by the pressures and demands associated with learning classical piano and violin. But then, when she was in her late teens, she discovered the guitar and post-rock music, and her musical spark was truly ignited.

It's perhaps understandable given her background that the guitar style she's developed is a dizzying hybrid of violin and piano, her fingers moving effortlessly across the fretboard: her right hand a blur of taps and pull-offs, working in perfect harmony with her deftly moving left. With two albums of dizzying and melodic math-rock under her belt with Covet, Young is truly one of the brightest talents of The New Breed. **G**
LISTEN TO Covet – ***Shibuya***

ABOVE LEFT Austin, Texas is a crucibile for incredible blues guitarists, and Berklee College of Music graduate Jackie Venson is the latest in a long line

ABOVE Harrison Whitford is Phoebe Bridgers' guitar foil and an established solo artist in his own right

WorldMags.net

GIBSON

LES PAUL MODERN

WORDS CHRIS VINNICOMBE

Gibson's top-of-the-line Modern Collection model might be the most versatile Les Paul around, but will it scare off the purists?

Gibson's back-to-basics approach has seen the rejuvenated company streamline its electric-guitar catalogue and carve it up into three distinct ranges. The Original Collection and Custom Shop are the primary destinations for purists looking for vintage-style looks and specifications, while the Modern Collection is where you'll find a mixture of the stripped down and souped up.

Sitting pretty at the top of the heap in the Modern Collection is the Les Paul Modern. During Henry Juszkiewicz's reign, this model would probably have been called the 2020 Les Paul Standard – it certainly inherits a few features from some of Gibson's more experimental riffs on the 'Standard' theme.

The chief alterations to the classic recipe are an 'Ultra-Modern' weight relief pattern, a slim-taper neck with an asymmetrical profile and contoured heel, a 10-16-inch compound radius ebony fingerboard with binding but no nibs, locking Grover Rotomatics and an aluminium Nashville Tune-o-

WorldMags.net

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £2,299 (inc. hard case)
DESCRIPTION Solidbody electric guitar. Made in USA
BUILD Weight-relieved mahogany body with carved maple top, mahogany set neck with asymmetrical slim taper and modern contoured heel, 10-16" compound-radius ebony fingerboard with mother of pearl trapezoid inlays, 22 medium-jumbo frets, Graph Tech nut
HARDWARE Chrome-finished aluminium Nashville Tune-o-matic bridge and stop tailpiece, Grover locking Rotomatic tuners with keystone buttons
ELECTRICS Burstbucker Pro (rhythm) and Burstbucker Pro+ (lead) humbucking pickups with 3-way toggle pickup selector switch, 2x push/pull volume (coil-split) and 2x push/pull tone (phase, pure bypass)
SCALE LENGTH 24.75"/629mm
NECK WIDTH 43.3mm at nut, 52.9mm at 12th fret
NECK DEPTH 20.5mm at first fret, 23.4mm at 12th fret
STRING SPACING 36mm at nut, 50.9mm at bridge
WEIGHT 3.9kg/8.8lb
FINISH Gloss nitrocellulose Sparkling Burgundy (as reviewed), Graphite, Faded Pelham Blue
CONTACT Gibson gibson.com

matic bridge that's secured in threaded inserts rather than screwed straight into the body.

The binding is bright white and the hardware a mirror-like chrome, while the mildly futuristic clear top-hat knobs provide access to a quartet of push/pull potentiometers hard-wired to an internal PCB.

Pulling either of the Burstbucker Pros' volume controls into the up position puts the corresponding pickup into single-coil mode. The neck pickup's tone control is where you'll also find phase switching, while the bridge pickup's tone control activates a 'pure bypass' that routes straight to the bridge humbucker with the tone control removed from the circuit.

Although the brown-stained neck and back has the kind of hue you'd have found on old Goldtops, the Modern is offered with a trio of eye-catching metallic tops: Faded Pelham Blue, Graphite and Sparkling Burgundy (as here). Aside from a few areas of slight bleed into the white binding, the finish is sharp, without 'orange peel' – and the deep, blood-red top really pops when framed by the binding and sides.

TOP The Les Paul Modern's contoured neck heel allows for easier upper-fret access than the original 1950s design

ABOVE Tone choices are enhanced by push/pull volume (coil-split) and push/pull tone (phase, pure bypass) options

IN USE

Modern it may be, but this Les Paul isn't so radical a rewrite that it feels in any way alien. In fact, played

WorldMags.net

RIGHT The Grover locking Rotomatic tuners with keystone buttons are smooth and efficient

ABOVE RIGHT Coil-split and phasing options add usable single-coil voicings and hollow, funkier tones respectively

acoustically, the formula is very familiar. Although its mahogany body is heavily chambered, this 3.9kg/8.8lb guitar is still reassuringly substantial, with a smooth and balanced unplugged voice and no shortage of sustain above the 12th fret. The body thickness may be 10mm shallower than usual behind the contoured heel, but it doesn't seem to have a negative sonic impact.

The asymmetric neck carve is subtle but effective. The slightly more rounded bass side and skinnier treble-side taper combine with the compound-radius fingerboard to offer a smooth, comfortable ride, but relatively small medium-jumbo frets serve to keep things firmly in the 'classic' ballpark and may alienate more technical players.

That said, it's one of those guitars that encourages the more stoic among us to be a little more daring. Although there's still a fair bit of mass to negotiate – this isn't an SG, after all – when you get to those upper registers, the slinkier heel area makes soloing above the 17th fret considerably easier than on a traditionally constructed LP Standard.

Beginning with the full-fat humbucker tones, we're greeted with plenty of treble, clarity, dynamic range and articulation – gone are the days when a new Gibson neck pickup is likely to sport a woolly blanket. With a clean tone and spring reverb, it's easy to get lost in a seriously expressive pool of tones beyond hard rock. While original PAFs, Patent Number humbuckers and expensive PAF clones might get closer to the sonic high-water mark of the golden era, Gibson's pickups have made significant strides in the right direction of late.

Gibson is keen to describe the LP Modern's single-coil voices as having P-90 characteristics, so we pull up the volume pots to see how close they get. Unlike many coil-split circuits, there's no significant drop in level when switching from full humbucking mode, so that's a good start. The treble softens and you do hear some of the wiriness, chewy midrange and nasal tones that characterise Gibson's iconic single-coil. The LP Modern isn't going to fool anyone in a blind comparison with an old P-90 Goldtop or Special, but the single-coil voices here provide some interesting colours in their own right and respond particularly well to gain. We can imagine them being a real boon for your function-band gig.

The neck pickup's phase switch, on the other hand, does result in a big drop in output – but it hollows things out nicely for percussive funk and scratchy 'special effect' lead tones. Flip to the pure bypass mode, however, and it's the other end of the spectrum entirely. The additional kick and upper harmonic presence it brings to the bridge humbucker is tailor made for those big rock riffs and show-stopping solos.

The Les Paul Modern might not have the romantic allure of a heavily aged Burst reissue or even a flamey Standard, but it's a seriously versatile performance tool. With no built-in effects or Robot Tuners in sight, it feels like a contemporary take on a classic design rather than a gimmick and it retains enough essential Les Paul DNA to keep a high proportion of Lester fans happy. **G**

8/10 **With expanded sonics and modern updates, this sharp-dressed LP is worthy of an audition**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Chapman Guitars V2 ML2 Modern Standard **£499**, Gretsch G6228 Players Edition Jet BT **£1,979**, Nik Huber Orca '59 **£7,250**

WorldMags.net

ATB GUITARS

– FORMERLY ATOYBOY GUITARS –

NEW SHOWROOM JUST OPENED!!

Come and visit us, by appointment, in our newly refurbished showroom in Regency Cheltenham at the heart of the Cotswolds

All our stock will be on display for trial, together with a cool range of vintage amps and some irresistible coffee.

WE BUY AND SELL VINTAGE GIBSON AND FENDER GUITARS FROM THE 50'S 60'S AND 70'S - THAT'S ALL WE DO, AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

Visit us at www.atbguitars.com for full details and quality photos of all items
Follow us on Facebook or Instagram for news of daily arrivals

– AT THE TIME OF WRITING SOME OF THE ITEMS WE HAVE IN STOCK INCLUDE: –

1957 Gibson ES-5 Switchmaster
1956 Gibson ES-5N Switchmaster Blonde
1959 Gibson ES-355 Mono Stoptail
1960 Gibson ES-345 TDSV Cherry PAF's
1962 Gibson ES-335 TD PAF PAT
1964 Gibson ES-345 TDVC
1956 Gibson ES-175D
1959 Gibson ES-175D Players
1967 Gibson ES-330L Burgundy

1934 Gibson Super 400

1957 Fender Stratocaster Mary Kaye
1959 Fender Stratocaster maple neck
1961 Fender Stratocaster Blonde
1962 Fender Stratocaster Fiesta Red
1963 Fender Stratocaster Olympic White
1969 Fender Stratocaster S/B
1973 Fender Stratocaster LPB
1982 Fender Stratocaster AVRI

1952 Fender Telecaster ex-Lenny Kravitz
1953 Fender Telecaster
1956 Fender Telecaster
1958 Fender Telecaster Custom Prototype CATALOGUE guitar!
1967 Fender Custom Telecaster Candy Apple Red
1968 Fender Telecaster Thinline
1969 Fender Telecaster Sonic Blue

1959 Fender Jazzmaster Blonde
1963 Fender Jaguar Blonde Gold
1966 Fender Jaguar Olympic White

1952 Gibson Les Paul Goldtop
1955 Gibson Les Paul Goldtop
1968 Gibson Les Paul Goldtop
1958 Gibson Les Paul Custom
1960 Gibson Les Paul Custom
1974 Gibson Les Paul Custom
1955 Gibson Les Paul Junior
1959 Gibson Les Paul Junior 3/4
1960 Gibson Les Paul TV Junior
1956 Gibson Les Paul TV Special
1962 Gibson Les Paul SG STD Ebony Block
1963 Gibson Les Paul SG STD
1963 Gibson Korina Flying V White

1966 Fender Jazz Bass Sonic Blue MINT
1953 Fender Precision Bass
1980 Musicman Bass MINT!

1963 Gretsch Tennessean
1972 Dick Knight Custom Twin Neck ex Jon Camp Renaissance
1967 Rickenbacker 360/12 Gold Parts

1964 Epiphone FT110 Frontier
1968 Martin 00-18C

2005 PRS Employees Model Santana 2
2016 PRS DGT Private Stock
2015 Gibson True Historic Ace Frehley
2016 Gibson True Historic R9 Tom Murphy

WE WILL PAY EXTREMELY GOOD MONEY FOR SIMILAR VINTAGE GUITARS.

A selection of recent sales »

All The Best Guitars

1967 Gibson ES-335 TD Pelham Blue

1957 Gibson ES-5 Switchmaster

1952 Fender Telecaster Blackguard

1956 Gibson Les Paul Standard MINT

1969 Gibson Flying V

1964 Fender Stratocaster Olympic White

www.atbguitars.com atbguitars atbguitars @atbguitars
Email: info@atbguitars.com • Tel: 01242 697607 • Int: +44 1242 697607

RELISH

MARY ONE

WORDS MICHAEL WATTS

Guitar.com EDITOR'S CHOICE

Precision engineering and modern design combine to make a boundary-pushing guitar from the foothills of the Swiss Alps

Over the last five years, Switzerland's Relish Guitars has introduced and refined its line of eye-catching hand-made instruments that challenge traditions and preconceptions about the electric guitar from the ground up. Making around 250 instruments per year, Relish has two core models in its line and this is the Mary One, a 24-fret single-cut which offers an eyebrow-raising level of versatility in addition to its bold looks.

At the heart of the Mary One is a lightweight machined aluminium frame, to which the maple neck – featuring stainless-steel frets set into a strand-woven bamboo fretboard – is securely bolted. The neck itself is one piece, with the back angle on the headstock created using a specialised Scandinavian wood-bending technique rather than a potentially weak angled joint. Relish Guitars believes its approach makes the headstock almost completely unsnappable, which is reassuring.

The Mary One's aluminium frame is covered fore and aft by the two halves of the guitar's body with what Relish calls a 'floating sandwich construction'. The top and back are separated from the aluminium core by rubber layer connectors which, according to Relish, "allow the aluminum centre to vibrate freely and produce an increased resonance, similar to a soundboard inside of a piano."

The magnetically attached back is made from high-density, high-pressure wood laminate and the bevelled front is a medium-density slice of the same, in this case adorned with a veneer of beautifully figured Chilean Tineo wood, although other equally spectacular and environmentally friendly options are available. The headstock is given the same elegant

WorldMags.net

KEY FEATURES

PRICE €3,799 (inc. hard case)
DESCRIPTION Six-string electric guitar with interchangeable pickups and 'floating sandwich' construction. Made in Switzerland
BUILD Milled aluminium and high-pressure laminate body with Chilean Tineo veneer, bolt-on one-piece bent maple neck with 10"-radius dark strand woven bamboo fingerboard, 24 medium-jumbo stainless-steel frets, two-way truss rod, Graph Tech nut
HARDWARE Graph Tech bridge, Gotoh SG381 locking tuners
ELECTRONICS 2x handwound Relish humbucker-sized P90 pickups swappable for Relish XV humbuckers, active Graph Tech Ghost piezo system, master volume, tone and 3-way blade pickup selector (magnetic pickups), piezo volume (push/pull midrange boost), 3-way mini-toggle (magnetic only, magnetic/piezo blend and piezo-only)
SCALE LENGTH 650mm/25.59"
NECK WIDTH 42.5mm at nut, 52mm at 12th fret
NECK DEPTH 22mm at 1st fret, 22mm at 12th fret
STRING SPACING 35mm at nut, 52mm at bridge
WEIGHT 3.7kg/8.2lb
LEFT-HANDERS No
FINISH Semi-matt varnish, numerous finish options (see site)
CONTACT Relish relish.swiss

veneer treatment, although its abrupt lines may divide opinion.

These initial specifications already hint at an instrument that differs from the norm, but there's more to be discovered. Opening the stylish hard case for the first time, we find that the guitar arrives with a pair of hand-wound P-90s installed. However, the Mary One also comes with a pair of humbuckers in the case, in addition to an onboard active Graph Tech Ghost piezo bridge, which lets you blend more 'acoustic' textures into your playing.

Each of the conventional electric pickups is mounted on a magnetic chassis with a four-pin connection. This allows you to pop the back off the instrument and swap pickups in less time than it takes an open E chord to die off. You can also raise and lower the height of each pickup. This is impressive, but you'll also have to remove the back to change the piezo battery or indeed, the strings.

Despite a potentially intimidating palette of sounds on offer, the control system is intuitive enough with single master tone and volume for the magnetic pickups and a push/pull volume knob for the piezo with a mid-boost. There's a three-position selector switch for the magnetic pickups and a mini-toggle switch which moves you smoothly through magnetic only, magnetic/piezo blend and piezo-only options.

On a strap, the Mary One is a well-balanced guitar with a sleek, ergonomic feel – this is perhaps surprising from an instrument that owes more to Ulrich Teuffel and Ken Parker than it does to Leo

TOP Gotoh SG381 locking tuners adorn the veneered headstock

ABOVE LEFT The 'floating sandwich construction' body is made from milled aluminium and high-pressure laminate, with a Chilean Tineo veneer

ABOVE RIGHT The 10-inch radius dark strand woven bamboo fingerboard has 24 medium-jumbo stainless-steel frets

WorldMags.net

ABOVE You'll need to access the futuristic Mary One's innards to change strings, pickups and pickup height, along with the piezo system's battery. Luckily the magnetically attached back pops off quickly and easily

ABOVE RIGHT The Mary One has a Graph Tech bridge and active Ghost piezo system

Fender or Ted McCarty. The semi-matt-finished neck has a gentle C carve and the 10-inch radius 'board feels open and fast under the fingertips.

IN USE

With its 24-fret neck and 650mm (25.59-inch) scale length we can expect a lively, vibrant response and the first strummed chords through a clean amp don't disappoint. The P-90s cover a lot of tonal ground and stay articulate and musical across all positions. This is very much a modern sound, with power at the front of the note blooming elegantly into smooth sustain.

Blending in a little piezo adds shimmer, which moves us into boosted lipstick territory. As we kick in some dirt from a Beetronics Royal Jelly, the Mary One reveals a snarling SG-meets-Tele character, which encourages a nuanced and dynamic approach from the picking hand. It's a lot of fun.

It takes only a few seconds to pop the hood and load the Mary One with a pair of humbuckers, which ramp up the power and take us immediately into classic rock and hard blues. Interestingly, the neck pickup's response is very Burst-like – there's a surprising level of clarity on offer and an immediate, bell-like response with extended chord voicings ringing through beautifully.

The bridge humbucker is throaty, rich, and powerful – more reminiscent of a hollowbody PRS than anything from Kalamazoo. If shred is your thing, there's ample amounts of aggression available with plenty of scope for sustained, expressive bends along the neck – although access to the very top frets is a little hampered by the relatively shallow cutaway.

The piezo pickup, although it won't fool anyone on its own, sounds surprisingly natural and acoustic in a band mix. It also features an active boost and with a Y-cable you can split the stereo signal, allowing for some expressive blended textures such as clean piezo and stereo delay via an acoustic amp or the PA, with the magnetic pickups routed into a traditional tube amp. That's just a serving suggestion, of course – the opportunities are only limited by one's imagination.

The Mary One offers an exhilarating playing experience across the board with rock-solid tuning thanks in no small part to the Graph Tech nut and Gotoh tuners. Its relatively light weight also makes it a pleasure to play standing for more than an hour.

There was a time when a review of any instrument designed later than 1960 would inevitably begin with a sweeping caveat about the fear and mistrust that the shock of the new can instil in the guitar buying public. While it remains true that classic 20th-century designs will always have a place in the hearts of many, there are modernistic new instruments out there that really should not be ignored.

Drawing a parallel with the timepieces for which the Swiss are perhaps better known, if the Fender Stratocaster is a vintage Patek Philippe Calatrava, then the Relish Mary One is a Hublot Tourbillon. It's bold, challenging, in your face – and very good at its job. **G**

9/10 **Tone and musicality in abundance from a brand with performance, ethically sourced materials and precision at its heart**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

PRS Custom 24 Piezo **£3,950**, Music Man John Petrucci Majesty 6 CT **£3,750**, Teuffel Birdfish **£14,250**

WorldMags.net

NEW FOR 2019

ÜLTRAMAG™

TYPE 52 ALLOY ELECTRIC GUITAR STRINGS

HIGH ENERGY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

ROTOSOUND®

WORLD FAMOUS MUSIC STRINGS

ROTOSOUND.COM

WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS

The Los Angeles session scene of 2019 is a long way from the halcyon days of **Tommy Tedesco**, **Carol Kaye** and **Bill Pitman**, but it's still a vibrant and exciting place where hotshot musicians get the opportunity to work with some of the biggest acts on the planet. Over the last few years, a quiet revolution has taken place, and a new contingent of young, hungry and talented guitarists have begun to make serious waves as guns for hire in the LA music world. Meet the key players in…

THE NEW WRECKING CREW

WORDS MICHAEL JAMES ADAMS

WorldMags.net

ARIANNA POWELL

In Los Angeles, capable guitarists are a dime a dozen. Oftentimes, the most capable are also the least gainfully employed. To stand out in this business, you've got to be reliable, versatile, and most of all, persistent. Find your niche and make a decent noise. Some may cite luck as a key factor, but for Arianna Powell, luck has little to do with it. In her mind, it's all about making connections and showing up.

"I have always involved myself in many different scenes, so I've been able to build up a good reputation with a large network of people," she tells us. "Of course, it's imperative to be the best musician you can be, but in order to work, you really need to be a reliable person that people what to spend time around."

Since arriving on the LA scene, she's worked hard to make herself a known quantity to prospective employers. She took every chance she could to play with any artist who would have her – and some of her biggest breaks have come from simply being in the right place at the right time. "Someone told me, 'It's not who you know, it's who knows you,' and it's true. I met the guy who helped put me on my first tour with Nick Jonas sitting in at [famed LA Jazz Club] The Baked Potato playing a John Scofield tune with the house band."

Powell hails from Pen Argyl, a Pennsylvania Slate Belt borough just a stone's throw north of Allentown, the real-world setting for Billy Joel's famous tune about blue-collar hardship and the decline of American industry. She comes to LA by way of Pittsburgh, where she played in a wedding band that happened to have an LA-based counterpart. It was through this chapter that she made her first connections out west, booking corporate and club gigs by reputation alone. "It was just a lot of making friends and connections by being out in the scene as much as possible and taking every chance to play that I could."

Like so many, Arianna got her start with the guitar through her family. Her father, who was a folk fingerpicker, introduced her to the likes of Bob Dylan, Gordon Lightfoot and Ramblin' Jack Elliott. As she grew up, her taste in music naturally extended outward to metal, ska and even jazz. "My tastes have always been varied, so in the early days I'd learn Norah Jones songs and Kirk Hammett solos in the same afternoon."

She drew inspiration from female artists of the 90s and 00s – Alanis Morissette, Sheryl Crow and Gwen Stefani; later, she studied Jazz at Duquesne University, where she transcribed arrangements of Johnny Smith and Joe Pass while spending nights taking the stage with various bi-coastal pop and rock cover outfits.

Powell's made a career for herself as a side woman backing big-name acts such as Nick Jonas, Chris Brown, Drake Bell and most notably, The Black Eyed Peas. She's worked with Canadian producer/songwriter David Foster, played on *American Idol* and devotes some of her time to working with up-and-coming artists including Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Daya (also from PA) and 17-year-old Instagram star turned pop powerhouse AJ Mitchell. At the time of publishing, she'll be winding down a radio promotional tour with singer and former *The X Factor USA* contestant, Rachel Crow.

As a guitarist in a predominantly pop-oriented scene, one might expect that demand for the instrument has waned in recent times, but Powell sees her role within a production as important as ever. "I'm there to add energy and life to tracks that do not have much guitar in the first place," she says. It makes sense when you consider the current mode of pop production: the bulk of work takes place in software

WorldMags.net

and keyboard and mouse are the instruments of choice for many popular artists. A 'real' instrument thrown in tends to breathe life into the mix.

While she's no stranger to the studio, it's the stage where she truly feels most comfortable. "I like playing for people and feeling their energy," she confesses. "I feel more free." Whether in a stadium or a theatre, Powell's fleet-fingered technique never fails to impress. What's more, she's able to morph between fiery, fluid shredding to laid-back grooving, all while making a cohesive musical statement, which perhaps has something to do with the fact that she's an avid blackjack player. "It's important to choose parts and sounds that make an impact; what's a set without a ripping guitar solo?"

Most often, you'll find Arianna wielding a PRS or Suhr, but her favourite instruments in her collection are a Shell Pink Fender Custom Shop '63 Telecaster Custom and her Gibson ES-339, which she usually plays through a Fender Twin or Hot Rod Deluxe.

These days, Arianna's hard at work on two albums of her own: one of solo guitar arrangements and well as another that she calls "more song-centric". For now, she'll continue to be an active and positive participant in the LA scene. "[Los Angeles] has so many great artists and musicians who are genuinely good people. They work really hard to perform honest, unique music, while supporting themselves and their careers. I wish labels would invest in those people instead of Instagram models."

MASON STOOPS

Perhaps more than any other player in Los Angeles, Mason Stoops embodies the phrase 'wise beyond their years'. When you experience Mason's prowess for the first time, you'll swear you're hearing a player many years his senior. Those controlled pedal-steel bends, roots-rock interludes and the throaty growl from his favoured Guyatone neck pickup all speak to a musician who isn't content to simply cop the tones, but rather one who delights in knowing where it all came from.

Perhaps it's best to think of Mason as a sort of musical archaeologist – the Indiana Jones of Mississippi John Hurt – because to him, it's not just the notes or the style that's important, it's understanding the complex lineage of guitar music. What a given player was thinking and what their life was like matters just as much as tone and tempo. "If there's an artist you really love, dig into that artist and find out which artists blew their mind. I'm a big believer in that. Backward is forward."

As a kid growing up in Orange County just south of LA, music wasn't always the plan. Chuckling into the phone, Mason recounts the winding path of his childhood career choices: "I wanted to be a pilot, or a race-car driver like my dad. Later, I wanted to go to military school, but my mom made me take a year of art school where I studied visual arts." All of that melted away when one of his art-school teachers sent him down a musical rabbit hole, and soon enough, he was begging his mother for a bass guitar. As it turns out, she didn't know the difference, so he ended up with a guitar for Christmas. "I woke up early and went downstairs and saw the guitar there. I pressed down on the frets and thought, 'Wow, this is hard.'" After a few minutes, he crept back to bed where he had an epiphany, a feeling that washed over him and never left. "It was a total physical feeling – a wave of calm. 'That's it, I play guitar now. This is your life.'"

A passion for guitar music was ignited within him and ever since that moment, he's been fully immersed. Fugazi, Green Day and Rancid were major early influences and Mason goes on to cite Against Me! as his first-ever rock-show experience. While punk rock is still part of his musical vocabulary, it was the discovery of Chet Atkins that set Mason on his current path.

"I'd get to my lessons early and listen to my teacher practice, and it sounded like five guitars going at the same time… Eventually, I figured out he was playing Chet Atkins." Following a brief period of near-incessant pleading, his teacher finally agreed to show him Travis picking and fingerstyle technique, which lead him to roots music, early rock 'n' roll, and country music. Page, Clapton, Beck, all of the usual suspects get name checked, but the two names Mason holds in the deepest reverence are Mark Knopfler and Hank Marvin.

Stoops credits Knopfler as his biggest influence, as well as the sole reason he doesn't use a pick. "He didn't use one, so I didn't use one. I learned to do everything a pick could do without it." Given his initial interest in the bass, this makes a lot of sense;

WorldMags.net

there's an inherent 'thump' and 'groove' to Mason's playing, so his lack of a plectrum isn't the liability in sessions one might think. In fact, it's a personal goal of his for no one to know he's not using a pick, especially on session dates. "If I'm in the other room, the producer doesn't know."

Hank Marvin is the reason Mason is so connected to the historical side of guitar playing. "I learned early on that he was Knopfler's biggest hero. Page, Clapton, Beck – all of the original UK guitar heroes were influenced by Hank Marvin." Knowing that, Stoops started combing through Marvin's work and studied his technique intently. Along the way, he figured out just how precise that music really was, which he refers to as "Surf with a British accent."

"What he was doing was shredding, well, given the time frame," he waxes on, revealing that doing justice to the music hasn't been easy. "It's really challenging music to play right. It comes down to dynamics. It's so particular and precise, but when you listen to it, it sounds effortless.

"In the 1950s and 60s, Hank Marvin developed a sound that came from his own musical ecosystem. When you're a guitar player learning that music in 2019, it's really hard to let go of all of your own influences. It's so particular, so precise." This obsession with The Shadows continues today, with Mason's sporadic tribute performances of The Shadows' music here in Los Angeles. And yes, he plays it all on the requisite Fiesta Red Stratocaster.

When asked about his philosophy on making it in the LA scene, Mason quotes the best piece of advice he's ever been given: "Never be home." Legendary composer Richard Gibbs laid that piece of wisdom on him years ago. For Mason, that meant going to shows, making connections with like-minded artists and asking for help when he needed it. "If you're desperate to learn and play, the scene is here for you. I used to always hear how LA is tough, and back then it might have been, but now it's all open arms."

Fortunate, then, that Stoops also happens to be a true talent on the guitar. He weaves in and out of a melody with an insouciant mastery, a calculated nonchalance which sets him apart from many of his contemporaries. Each note is intentional yet effortless, fresh but deeply rooted in something much older and grander than the man himself. Time travel may be a thing of science fiction, but Stoops is very much a conduit to a bygone era; each bend, each wiry turn of phrase a glimpse into the past.

Stoops' main guitar is a mutt of a Telecaster, a semi-famous instrument made from a disparate mix of parts and vintage pickups strewn about his living space. The body, for example, served as the base of his drill press and is riddled with holes under its Bakelite 'guard which Mason cut by hand. It came about out of pure necessity, where gigs with country artists started cropping up. Soon enough, his Tele obsession took off.

Currently, the guitar is loaded with a rewound '63 Guyatone neck pickup and the bridge pickup from a '53 Fender Champ Steel, as well as a series of palm levers on the body by Mule Resophonic to help him emulate pedal-steel tones. (He's also in the midst of a secret project with pickup guru Curtis Novak, so keep your eyes peeled for that.) He plugs the so-called "White Tele" into a Tone King Imperial, modified by projector-amp advocate Austen Hooks. "It's always that amp with that guitar. I have a million guitars and amps, but I only ever use those two."

Believe it or not, you've probably heard Mason's playing before, whether on Discovery and History Channel reality TV shows, commercials, or his recent work with producer Tony Berg, whom he met through Blake Mills. This year, you can catch him on tour with none other than Jackson Browne and if you find yourself in LA sometime soon, you may run into him Wednesday mornings at Jones' Coffee as one half of Kibi Dango!, a duo with guitarist Adam Levy. Also, he and guitarist Ethan Sherman often perform as 'Rubberbuddies', so named after the special rubber-bridged vintage guitars they employ to weave haunting, sustain-less musical tapestries that sound like a three-way cross between piano, classical guitar and banjo.

WorldMags.net

HARRISON WHITFORD

Before we get started, consult YouTube and check out the Pitchfork Live Phoebe Bridgers live session at Brooklyn Steel. At around the 32-minute mark on the track *Motion Sickness*, the lead guitar plays around and off of Phoebe's restrained vocals, dancing around the subject matter like a politician embroiled in controversy who refuses to take questions. The debate between vocalist and instrumentalist sparks and settles, then eases back into a familiar blanket of coy jabs that come from a deep and abiding camaraderie.

This is the beauty of Harrison Whitford's talents: the obvious job of a so-called 'hired gun' is to support the artist, but it's a rare and special treat when one so profoundly enhances and complements the music that the live version feels so refreshing when compared with the already fantastic studio version found on *Stranger In The Alps* – a reminder that a good song continues to evolve long after the recording process has ceased.

Though he's clearly an incredibly skilled player, his real gift is in knowing exactly how and when to lay back so that the spotlight always stays on Bridgers' contemplative, arresting vocals, a skill likely gleaned by virtue of being surrounded by the guitar from an early age. Harrison's father and brother are also successful musicians in their own right – and it was that family connection which set him on his path. "It was the classic younger-brother scenario: watching my brother play sparked a wealth of admiration for the instrument. I had to do what he did."

When Harrison picked up the guitar aged 12, he was fortunate enough to have access to a number of amazing musicians to trade bars with, including Robert Randolph, Jonny Lang, Hubert Sumlin, Joe Satriani, and Chris Layton. He soaked up everything he could from them and defined his own style. "Getting to play with folks of that calibre at an early age taught me so many musical lessons. I think about them every single day. I owe everything I do and know to those cats."

Whitford likens his guitar work to his "chicken scrawl" handwriting, saying, "It always ends up sounding more raw than I intended." Unsurprisingly, honesty is a connecting thread between most of his favourite artists, among which are Paul Westerberg, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Ry Cooder, and Tom Waits. "In all of my favourite artists, you can hear their life experience in their work."

Whether he's writing on the piano or noodling around on his trusty Sea Foam Green Telecaster, Harrison's driving philosophy boils down to availability – to the artist, to the session, even to the songwriting muse. In the construction of a song,

WorldMags.net

he says it helps to not get ahead of oneself, to instead be present and let things bloom naturally. "I just try to be a good hang and deliver whatever I can on my instrument. I don't put too much thought into the end result of things."

His advice to other LA session hopefuls? Show up. "A huge part of inspiration for me is just showing up everyday. Eventually, you'll run into a big fish of an idea." This mindset has been immensely beneficial for him, with studio credits ranging from backing up Willie Nelson, working on an upcoming record with songwriter Johanna Samuels, as well as steady work alongside Phoebe Bridgers over the last six or so years. Whitford's also hard at work writing the follow-up to his 2018 album debut, *Afraid Of Everything*.

DYLAN DAY

Dylan Day's gig roster may read like a *Who's Who* of popular music – featuring the likes of Jackson Browne, Grace Potter, Jenny Lewis and Beck – but Dylan's mission isn't about fame or checking big names off a list. In fact, his outlook on life as a musician in Los Angeles is decidedly unencumbered. "My ideal situation is one where everyone has an open mind and good intentions. Where the larger picture is always seen."

Hailing originally from Fletcher, Vermont, Dylan's earliest musical memories revolve around his father strumming a few tunes on his Gibson B-25 to settle in for the evening. Kris Kristofferson and Johnny Cash were old standbys and before too long, he fell in love with music. Bedrock American artists like Brian Blade, Arvo Pärt and Mississippi John Hurt had a huge impact on Dylan's understanding of songwriting, while Southern gospel and Gaelic music informed his style and sound.

In his teen years, he cut his teeth playing at town meetings and dance halls, later graduating to clubs in New York City and Boston. Eventually, Dylan moved to Los Angeles and started making records and found his stride with a number of like-minded artists, including the stellar names mentioned above.

Day tends to gravitate toward open, moody tones – "A halo around the moon," as he puts it. When asked about gear preferences, he sums up his tastes succinctly in our email correspondence: "1950s electronics and good transformers. Gear that I can turn up and play softly." While he's usually strumming a Gibson BB King model or a Gold Foil-equipped Telecaster, Dylan doesn't actually own much in the way of gear these days. He's jettisoned most of what he owns and uses whatever tools are available to him at the studio on any given day.

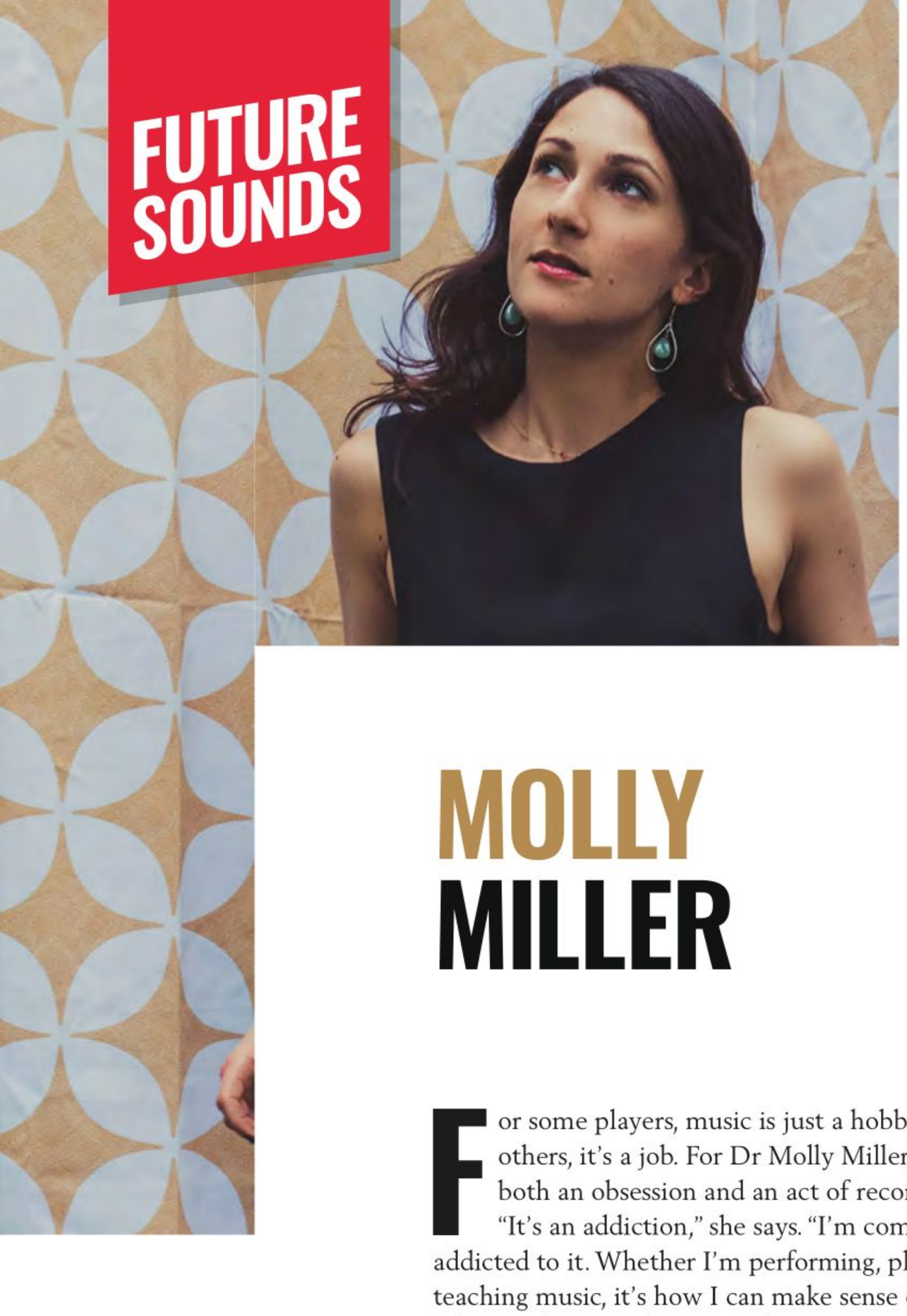
No matter the instrument, his style feels like reading between the lines: Dylan's sombre, breathy tone lives in the space connecting verses, with wistful peals that break through a melody just long enough to suggest a feeling only to retreat just as quickly as they arrived.

With a delicate touch, his laid-back licks hang in the air like jazz-club smoke rings and lifts even the saddest songs with a hopeful, decisive air. 'Texture' isn't quite the right word for it; what he does is more like pressing one's finger to a mood ring, releasing, then watching as the memory of body heat fade through the spectrum until it's gone completely.

In most musical situations, Day doesn't seem to mind what role he plays, only that the work is real and authentic. In the studio, Day looks for conceptual payoffs, mining for sounds and supporting the musical narrative; on stage, he aims for intent and passion. In response to queries about his process, Dylan's answer is short and sweet: "I do everything I can to lift up the music."

Currently, Dylan Day can be found on tour with Jenny Lewis, living out his favourite mantra: "Give what you have to give. Every day."

WorldMags.net



MOLLY MILLER

For some players, music is just a hobby. For others, it's a job. For Dr Molly Miller, music is both an obsession and an act of reconciliation. "It's an addiction," she says. "I'm completely addicted to it. Whether I'm performing, playing, teaching music, it's how I can make sense of being a human being in this crazy place."

Molly, who holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Guitar Performance as well as a Master's in Jazz Studio Guitar, is one of the hardest-working guitarists in the LA scene, known for injecting strident bursts of energy into a track with her unique melodic sense and incredible timing. If you ever have the chance to catch her in action, either with her own Trio or on tour with Jason Mraz, you'll be hard-pressed to find a more confident and entertaining musician. And that's to say nothing of her mastery of the musical vocabulary, spoken fluently as a second language.

Born and raised in Los Angeles as one of five children, Dr Miller found music at an early age – or, rather, it was thrust upon her. At the age of seven, her parents decided to put such a large family to good use and started a band. Molly got picked to be the guitarist of the bunch and soon enough, she was taking the stage at talent shows, street fairs and private parties.

It wasn't until she discovered Jimi Hendrix at 14 that she really started digging in. "I hated practicing guitar in high school, but I learned *Purple Haze* and it opened up the world."

Thanks to a stint at Berklee summer camps, Molly finally realised that she wanted to be a musician and hasn't slowed down since. Unlike players who move to LA from elsewhere and are forced to start from scratch, Molly's been a known quantity here for years. From the beginning, what she loved most about music was the sense of community, so she naturally and organically built up a network around her as she progressed and gained near-constant work.

"I overbook myself," she confesses. "I think I spent literally two nights at home this year." Molly refers to herself as "focused," and that focus has paid dividends for Miller, who seems endlessly busy between shows with indie-pop outfit Steady Holiday, recording and tour dates with her brother Sammy Miller, as well as an upcoming album and a packed schedule with her own project, the Molly Miller Trio. Miller has also toured with singer-songwriter Jason Mraz over the last two-and-a-half years and for her, the experience has been as illuminating as it has been life-changing.

Comparing it to other jobs, Miller points to the hierarchy as the biggest difference. "It's hard to play with pop artists and still be able to express yourself, but Jason encourages you to dig into who you are and be that onstage." In Mraz's band, authenticity is the name of the game and the way he conducts his life really impacts the rest of the crew. "It always trickles down from the top. His message is to love and to be kind to one another and he lives and breathes that. It reminds me that everyone has a choice in how they act and how they make others feel."

When asked about her major influences, Miller excitedly rattles off a host of names including Jimi Hendrix, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Julian Lage, Blake Mills and Rich Hinman – all of which come out a bit in her unique blend of jazz, funk, blues and country. Her unique instrumental voice, however, is unmistakable: she slings the guitar like a wordsmith, wry and sarcastic with a playful slant and flows from hushed whisper to bursts of elation with aplomb.

Like an accomplished orator, she speaks in complete instrumental sentences, her grammar impeccable, her ideas poignant and compelling. Listen to any of her releases or watch any of her many cover videos on YouTube and you'll immediately pick up on her mastery of subtle dynamic shifts and ability to meld familiar melodies and blue chords.

Miller typically tours with Gibson instruments, including her trusty '78 ES-335. She's also fond of a $900 Shell Pink Telecaster she scored from Craigslist which she simply describes as "super cute". Miller chooses ultra-dependable Sinasoid cables and often enhances her lush clean tones with pedals from Keeley Electronics and EarthQuaker devices.

Whether she's playing a $50 bar gig or a world tour, Molly maintains a grateful attitude. "I get to play inspiring music with people who inspire me… I'm living my dream." That dream also extends to her job at the Los Angeles College of Music, where she serves as head of the Guitar Department. "I have a lot of independence in my position, so I got to rewrite the curriculum. It's crazy, and it's scary."

She takes it all in stride and appears to relish the creative act more than anything else. "I love what I do. I play inspiring music with people who inspire me, people I've always looked up to. I took lessons from Adam Levy at 18 and now I have a gig with him tomorrow morning." **G**

WorldMags.net

PURE GRETSCH

ELECTROMATIC®

1939

G5420T
ELECTROMATIC HOLLOW BODY
CANDY APPLE RED

SOUND OF HONOR

GRETSCH
ELECTROMATIC

GRETSCH®

GRETSCHGUITARS.COM/ELECTROMATIC-HB

©2019 Fender Musical Instruments Corporation. Bigsby® is a registered trademark of FMIC, Gretsch® is a registered trademark of Fred W Gretsch Enterprises, Ltd. and used herein under license. All rights reserved.

WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS

BLACKSTAR
SILVERLINE STANDARD & STEREO DELUXE

WORDS CHRIS VINNICOMBE

Blending cool boutique stylings with powerful digital processing and affordability, Blackstar's new Silverline Series goes for gold…

From humble beginnings in a garden shed in the mid-2000s, British amp company Blackstar has become one of the guitar-amplification world's major players. Although problem-solving tech and form-factor innovations have brought the Northampton brand major successes in recent years, valve-amp knowhow has always been central to its identity, not least thanks to Blackstar co-founder and former Marshall technical director, Bruce Keir.

For Keir: "Amp design has always been about applying elegant engineering solutions to enhance the creative experience of musicians." Blackstar's new Silverline Series sees a number of these solutions coalesce in a stylish new range that combines affordability, versatility and broad appeal.

Let's begin with the cosmetics – aren't these the sexiest looking Blackstar amps to date? The smart silver-grey cabinets remind us of the White-branded amplifiers (named after Fender's former production manager and vice president Forrest White) which were designed by Leo and sold with a matching steel guitar between 1954 and 1962. It's a cool callback to one of the most important periods in tube-amp history, as is the Silverline's cheeky coffin-style logo, reminiscent of the earliest Marshalls.

Like a Fender narrow-panel tweed amp, the Silverline cab fronts are back-angled to aid projection. But while the mini chicken-head knobs on the brushed control panels tie in with the retro/boutique aesthetic, the technology inside is bang up to date.

Although there are no thermionic valves in sight, a high-performance SHARC floating-point processor is claimed to have the gas to reproduce the interdependent non-linear circuit parameters that tubes and other components bring to the amplifier signal chain. Meanwhile, Blackstar's proprietary TVP technology (aka True Valve Power, first introduced in 2013) simulates the way in which valve power stages interact with loudspeakers.

When you switch between the Silverline's six flavours of power-amp valve response – EL84, 6V6, EL34, KT66, 6L6, KT88 – you aren't simply selecting different preset EQ curves. TVP regulates the solid-state power amp digitally, affecting speaker damping and voltage across the coil, which in turn influences bass resonance, treble presence and the point at which distortion occurs.

The Silverline Series includes a 100-watt head and matching 2x12 cabinet, but our review amps bookend the combo offerings in the range. The Standard kicks out 20 watts from its 10-inch Celestion VT-Junior driver, while the Stereo Deluxe delivers a massive 100 watts from either side via a pair of 12-inch V-Types. Also available are the 50-watt 1x12 Special and the 100-watt 1x12 Deluxe.

The control panels here are broadly similar, although the Stereo Deluxe gets a middle control in addition to the Standard's treble, bass and ISF. The Stereo Deluxe also benefits from physical resonance

WorldMags.net

and presence controls in the master section and the larger amp's stealth effects loop can be activated via Blackstar's Insider software, which swaps the speaker-emulated output and mp3/line input for a preamp out and power-amp in.

In addition, Insider facilitates deep editing, preset organisation and patch sharing. You simply download the free software and connect any of the Silverline models to your computer via USB, which also enables direct recording and reamping functionality.

Both amplifiers share six Blackstar preamp voices, which range from sparkling clean to seriously mean,

KEY FEATURES

SILVERLINE STANDARD
PRICE £369
DESCRIPTION Digital electric-guitar combo amplifier with closed-back construction. Made in China
POWER RATING 20 watts
CONTROLS Voice, gain, volume, bass, treble, ISF, response, modulation, delay, reverb, effect type, effect level, master volume, manual, bank, 4x channel select, tap
CONNECTIONS 1x instrument input, 2x mini-jacks for emulated/headphone out and MP3/line in, 1x USB, 1x footswitch input
ADDITIONAL FEATURES 12 onboard presets expandable to 128 using Blackstar's FS-10 foot controller (£69). Tuner. Deep editing, preset organisation, patch sharing via free Insider software
SPEAKERS 1x10" Celestion VT-Junior, 4 ohms
DIMENSIONS 450 x 377 x 238mm
WEIGHT 11kg/24.2lb

8/10 **Compact, fully featured and affordable, the Standard is ideal for laid-back rehearsals and small gigs**

WorldMags.net

FUTURE SOUNDS

The Silverline's six preamp voices transition from pristine clean sounds to heavy overdrive

while four modulation effects (phaser, flanger, chorus, tremolo), four delays (linear, analogue, tape, multi) and four reverbs (room, hall, spring, plate) cater for all your wobble, echo and ambient needs. Meanwhile, switching from manual to preset mode offers a dozen fully customisable preset locations, expandable to 128 using Blackstar's FS-10 foot controller (£69).

IN USE

The grab-and-go nature of the Standard seems ideal for rehearsals and small gigs, so we jump in at the deep end. Up against a drummer using sticks in the potentially tricky environment of a small, rather dead-sounding room, the 20-watter has no trouble making itself heard and has clean headroom to spare, albeit in the context of a pretty laid-back Americana band. Still, it's a very good start.

With preamp voices built on Blackstar's own decade or so of sonic heritage and an array of simulated power amps from which to choose, there's a tonne of tones on offer. If you're looking for a classic Vox AC30-style sound, for example, it's incredibly straightforward to dial in.

With the 'clean bright' voice and EL84 response selected, crank the treble, roll the ISF back to about 10 o'clock and, depending on where we set the level control, an array of Petty/Beatles/early Who tones are readily available. And don't be shy with that treble – it really is the key to an authentic-sounding, valve-amp-like bite that occupies the right space in a band mix.

Don't be fooled by the compact 1x10 cabinet, either – there's a lot of bass on tap from this closed-back unit. At the opposite end of the musical spectrum to our Tele/EL84 duo, we plug in a Charvel seven-string, flip the response over to KT88 mode and the voice to 'super crunch' and the Standard copes remarkably well with the low B – only when

WorldMags.net

Blackstar's TVP tech simulates the response of six different valve power stages

Guitar.com EDITOR'S CHOICE

KEY FEATURES

SILVERLINE STEREO DELUXE
PRICE £749
DESCRIPTION Stereo digital electric-guitar combo amplifier with partial open-back construction. Made in China
POWER RATING 2x 100 watts
CONTROLS Voice, gain, volume, bass, middle, treble, ISF, response, modulation, delay, reverb, effect type, effect level, resonance, presence, master volume, manual, bank, 4x channel select, tap
CONNECTIONS Front panel: 1x instrument input, 1x USB. Rear panel: 2x 4-ohm speaker outputs, 1x MIDI in, 1x footswitch input, 1x MP3/line in (1/4-inch jack), 1x emulated output (1/4-inch jack)
ADDITIONAL FEATURES Super Wide Stereo. 12 onboard presets expandable to 128 using Blackstar's FS-10 foot controller (£69) or MIDI. Tuner. Effects loop, deep editing, preset organisation, patch sharing via free Insider software
SPEAKERS 2x12" Celestion V-Type, 4-ohms
DIMENSIONS 685 x 585 x 259mm
WEIGHT 24kg/52.9lb
CONTACT Blackstar Amplification blackstaramps.com

9/10 **An amp for big rooms, with valve-like punch and gloriously immersive stereo effects**

we drop down a whole tone to A does it feel like we're going to need a bigger boat.

Enter the Stereo Deluxe, then – and with mirrored settings, it's clear that the sheer scale of sound has been conceived for much bigger physical spaces. Even without engaging the effects that exploit the amp's stereo capabilities, the cabinet's partial open-back construction helps kick out an expansive racket that belongs in large clubs, concert halls and at festivals.

Returning to our AC30-style sound from earlier on, the air being pushed by the Stereo Deluxe's pair of 12-inch Celestions and large cabinet makes for a much more visceral experience than the Standard.

The additional physical controls offer an increased level of refinement, too, with the resonance and presence useful for tuning your favourite tones to the room on the fly. You also don't need to push the treble as hard to get airy highs as you do with the Stereo Deluxe's smaller sibling.

The onboard effects – a useful addition to the Standard's toolkit – blast off into the stratosphere on the Stereo Deluxe. Be prepared to lose hours sat at the other end of the room listening to your guitar dance from one side of the Super Wide Stereo image to the other – the combination of long delay and reverb settings here is so musical and inspiring that it will surely be the jumping off point for a lot of music. Throw some of the onboard tremolo into the mix and your audience will be wondering where you've hidden your massive pedalboard full of boutique stompboxes.

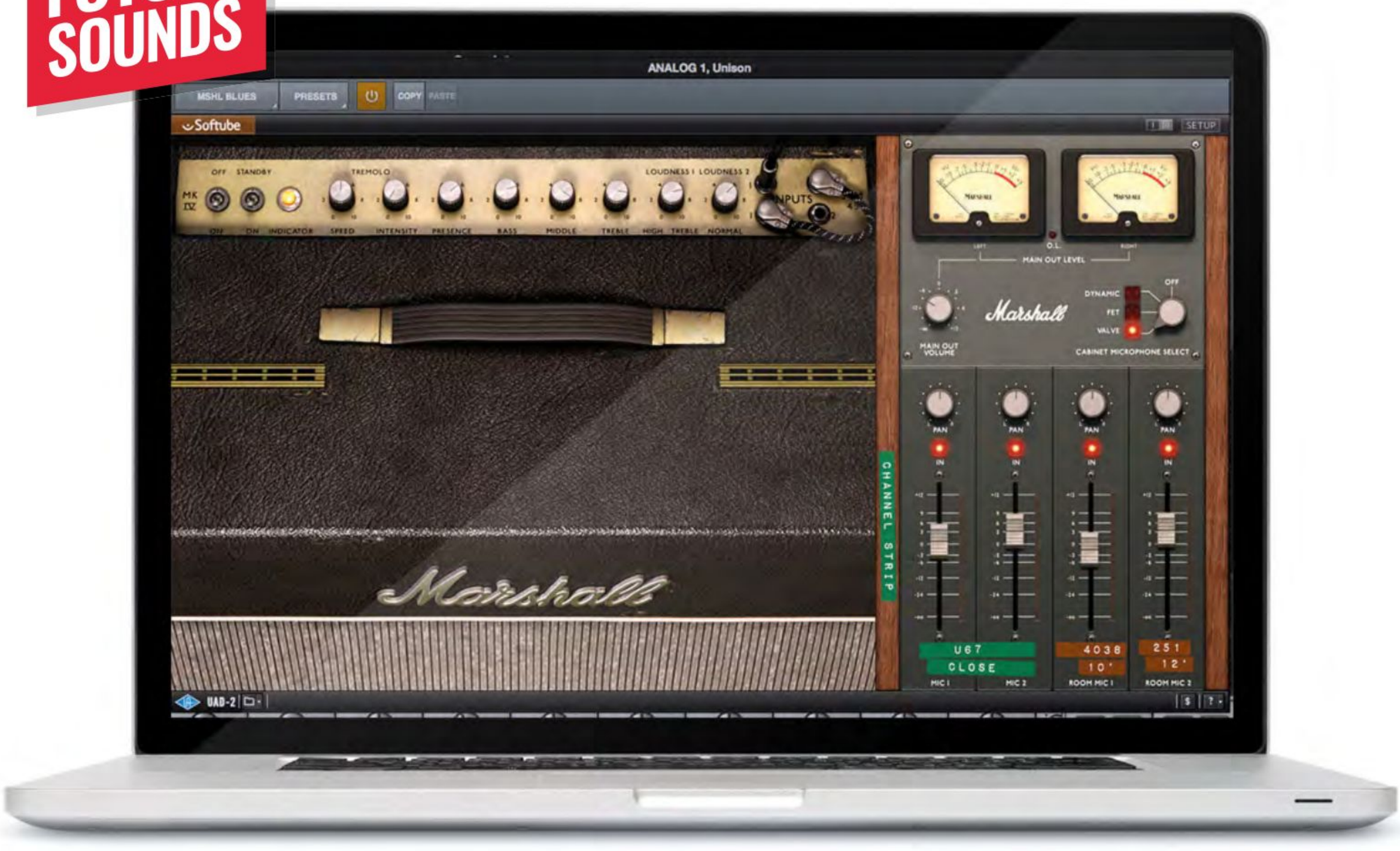
Recreating valve tones using a mixture of digital and solid-state tech isn't only about the sound, of course – feel is a real deal-breaker for many players. There definitely seems to be a greater immediacy from both amps here than we've experienced with Blackstar's prior digital designs, which further adds to the impression that Silverline is a culmination of ideas rather than a stopping point on a journey.

2019 feels like the year in which digital amplifiers have grown up, with some of the industry's biggest brands bringing products to market that ought to make even the most curmudgeonly vintage obsessives sit up and take notice. The Silverline Series is definitely on that list. **G**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

STANDARD Boss Katana 50 MKII **£237**, Line 6 Spider V 60 MkII **£259**, Fender Tone Master Deluxe Reverb **£869**
STEREO DELUXE Marshall Code100 **£349**, Boss Katana-100/212 MKII **£439**, Fender Tone Master Twin Reverb **£999**

WorldMags.net



UNIVERSAL AUDIO
MARSHALL LEGENDS BUNDLE

WORDS HUW PRICE

Guitar.com EDITOR'S CHOICE

Looking to capture the iconic roar of a vintage Marshall without waking up your neighbours? These UAD plug-ins may be the answer…

Universal Audio might be best known for its studio gear, but the game-changing OX unit and stellar Fender '55 Tweed Deluxe plug-ins are proof that the brand has plenty to offer modern guitarists.

This Marshall Legends bundle comprises a trio of amp-modelling plug-ins developed by Softube that work exclusively with Universal Audio's digital interfaces. They're compatible with UA's Unison technology, which means you can play through them and also record the sounds as you hear them, with no latency. Alternatively, you can choose to record direct and run pure guitar signals back through the amp plug-ins to dial in the exact tones you want. You could think of it as virtual re-amping.

Bundling three classic Marshall amp models together makes a lot of sense because 'Marshall tone' means different things to different people. It's understandable when you consider the company has been around since 1963, but regardless of the era, there are crossovers in sonic characteristics.

Even if you prefer 1970s Marshall tones, you'll probably like their mid-60s and 80s amps, too. This collection spans the key decades with a virtual KT66-powered mid-60s Bluesbreaker, a 1959 Super Lead Plexi and a 2555 Silver Jubilee from 1987.

IN USE

The virtual amps can be launched from individual channels on a DAW or from UAD's Console application, which is packaged with the UAD Apollo hardware interfaces that you need to run the plug-ins.

Launching the plug-ins loads up windows with amusingly real-world control-panel graphics. The Super Lead even has some Tolex damage, a missing metal cap on the middle control and a control panel that looks like it needs a good clean. The technology is serious, but the vibe is pure fun.

To the right of the control panels, you'll see the words 'Channel Strip'. Click on that and a small section of a mixing desk opens up with faders corresponding to two close mics and various room mics – the Bluesbreaker and Jubilee get two and the Super Lead only one. In effect, it's a mock-up of a typical guitar recording setup that might be used by a pro engineer in a commercial recording studio.

WorldMags.net

For each of the plug-ins, the room microphone models are pre-selected – a Coles 4038 ribbon and ELA M 251 for the Bluesbreaker, a C12 for the Super Lead and for the Silver Jubilee, a 4038 combined with an RNR, which can be routed through a delay effect with a feedback control and a range from 0ms to 300ms.

Each channel can be activated and panned individually and the choice of close proximity microphone models is extensive. All three plug-ins allow you to select dynamic mics, as well as FET and valve condensers and each one has a master-output level control that operates post faders. Plug-in-specific features include global low- and high-frequency adjustment on the Super Lead model and an input noise gate on the Jubilee.

For testing, we use an Apollo 8 Quad and once it's powered up with its audio outputs routed through our monitors, it's simply a case of plugging a guitar into one of the two Hi-Z instrument inputs on the front panel.

With the Console app launched, the Apollo 8 automatically detects which input is being used and that channel defaults to Hi-Z. From there, we adjust

TOP The Marshall Legends Bundle features amp plug-ins with authentic-sounding tones and vibey graphics

ABOVE The virtual amps can be launched from individual channels on a DAW or from UAD's Console application, which comes with the UAD Apollo interfaces

WorldMags.net

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £299

DESCRIPTION Digital plug-in bundle offering models of three vintage Marshall guitar amplifiers, for use with Universal Audio Apollo interfaces

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS Mac: Thunderbolt 3, macOS 10.12 Sierra, 10.13 High Sierra, or 10.14 Mojave. PC: Thunderbolt 3, Windows 7, 8.1 or 10 (64-Bit Edition)

CONTACT Universal Audio uaudio.com

TOP The Bundle features a virtual mid-60s Bluesbreaker, a Super Lead Plexi and this 2555 Silver Jubilee from 1987

ABOVE The Channel Strip button calls up a simulation of a typical studio guitar-recording setup for each amp

the channel's input gain to achieve a healthy level without clipping and click on the Unison box to open the plug-in menu. The Marshall amps are located in the guitar and bass section and we start working our way through the plug-ins.

Despite their rockin' reputation, Marshalls of every era are often overlooked for their versatility. Happily, this fact hasn't escaped Universal Audio – the tonal range is so extraordinary that if you have a Marshall tone in mind, then one of these plug-ins is pretty much guaranteed to deliver it.

The whole experience is uncannily lifelike, with the plug-ins capturing that glassy dirty clean and throaty roaring overdrive, as well as all points in between. Even the dynamics and the clean-up responses are eerily reminiscent of the real thing.

When you factor in the mic'ing options and desk-style EQ, the power of this DSP is astonishing. Start by loading up the excellent Tony Platt-created presets – if only to alert you to the possibilities. Then you can try adjusting the presets before creating and storing your own.

When your correspondent was working full-time as a studio engineer, the favoured practice when recording high-power Marshalls was to keep the head in the control room and run speaker wires through to the live room via tie lines. Once the mics were positioned, all the tone and volume changes could be made in a relatively low-noise control-room environment. Besides being a lot easier on the ears, tones and playing performances can be assessed in the context of the track while listening through studio monitors. It's a very efficient, comfortable and effective way of working and using the Marshall Legends Bundle provides all of the same advantages – albeit in a virtual form.

The tones on offer are convincing and inspiring, but you could argue that there are some downsides – playing a powerchord through a small monitor is a very different experience to the visceral thrill of standing in front of a flat-out Marshall and that interaction between guitar and amp, as bloom drifts into feedback, is also absent unless you're prepared to risk blowing up your monitors.

For the most part, however, the advantages greatly outweigh the disadvantages. And it's important to make clear that these UAD plug-ins are intended to emulate the tones of Marshall amps as they would sound when mic'd up in a pro recording studio – not the experience of playing while standing in front of the real thing. In that regard, these models are a complete success. They sound astonishing, but what's equally impressive is how intuitive, pleasurable and simple they are to use – there's nothing that kills inspiration quite like battling with a counterintuitive GUI.

Based on the full MSRP, buying the Marshall Legends Bundle rather than the individual plug-ins will save you £148 – which is effectively three plug-ins for the price of two.

However, keep your eyes open for UAD offers, because at the time of writing, buying individually is actually cheaper. **G**

9/10 **Fabulously lifelike software emulations of classic Marshalls that are simple to use and inspiring to play**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Softube Vintage Amp Room Bundle **£172**, IK Multimedia AmpliTube Max **£465**, Mercuriall Spark **$120**

WorldMags.net

ERNIE BALL
POWER SLINKY
REGULAR SLINKY
NOT EVEN SLINKY
BEEFY SLINKY
PRIMO SLINKY
EXTRA SLINKY
SUPER SLINKY
SKINNY TOP HEAVY BOTTOM
MAMMOTH SLINKY
MEGA SLINKY
ULTRA SLINKY
CUSTOM GAUGE NICKEL WOUND GUITAR STRINGS
MADE IN USA

@harmonyguitars

WorldMags.net

Make Your Own Rules

Stand out with the all-new **Harmony Rebel**.

Features:

- Made in USA
- Genuine mahogany body
- Nitrocellulose lacquer finish
- Bone nut
- Custom gold foil humbuckers
- Custom half bridge with compensated saddles
- Locking tuners
- Comes with free MONO® Vertigo Electric Guitar Case

Available in Burgundy, Champagne and Pearl White

Harmony

SINCE 1892

WorldMags.net

www.harmony.co

THE *Guitar* INTERVIEW

LUKE WOOD

Over the past 30 years, Beats Electronics president Luke Wood has been a key player in the music business. From Kurt Cobain to Elliott Smith and Phoebe Bridgers, he's been instrumental in the careers of some of the most talented songwriters of the modern era, all the while staying true to a creative approach that encourages experimentation and embraces the weird. We visit him at home in Los Angeles to talk guitar and find out more…

WORDS CHRIS VINNICOMBE **PHOTOGRAPHY** ELEANOR JANE

WorldMags.net

WorldMags.net

THIS SPREAD This 1959 Fender Jazzmaster is Luke's number one electric. Earlier this year he appeared onstage with Teenage Fanclub and used the guitar on the band's 1990 classic, *Everything Flows*. He bought the guitar from Keith Nealy, a member of early 1990s New York outfit, Cell. "He was a really good guitar player. Before Cell, he was the guitar tech for Sonic Youth for several years. That Jazzmaster had been with Sonic Youth for several years. The frets got a little worn down, so Thurston didn't like it anymore. In the late 80s, nobody gave a shit. It was not a popular guitar. So Keith sold it to me for like $500. I got it refretted and ever since then it's been my go-to, golden guitar. It just sounds perfect. As a touring musician I had other Jazzmasters that I would bring on the road, but I couldn't wait to get home to that guitar."

Think of an amazing American alternative-rock record from the 1990s or 2000s; the chances are that Luke Wood was in the room when it was recorded. For several decades, the Rochester, New York native has been at the bleeding edge of the US music industry, whether helping shape the careers of Nirvana, Sonic Youth, Weezer, Elliott Smith, Jimmy Eat World and countless others during his time at Geffen, DreamWorks and Interscope, or heading up Beats Electronics – the headphone and speaker company founded by Dr Dre and Jimmy Iovine that was acquired by Apple for $3 billion in 2014.

Along with his role at Beats, Wood holds a seat on Fender's board of directors and he also recorded one of Phoebe Bridgers' first demos. To refer to him simply as influential would be a huge understatement.

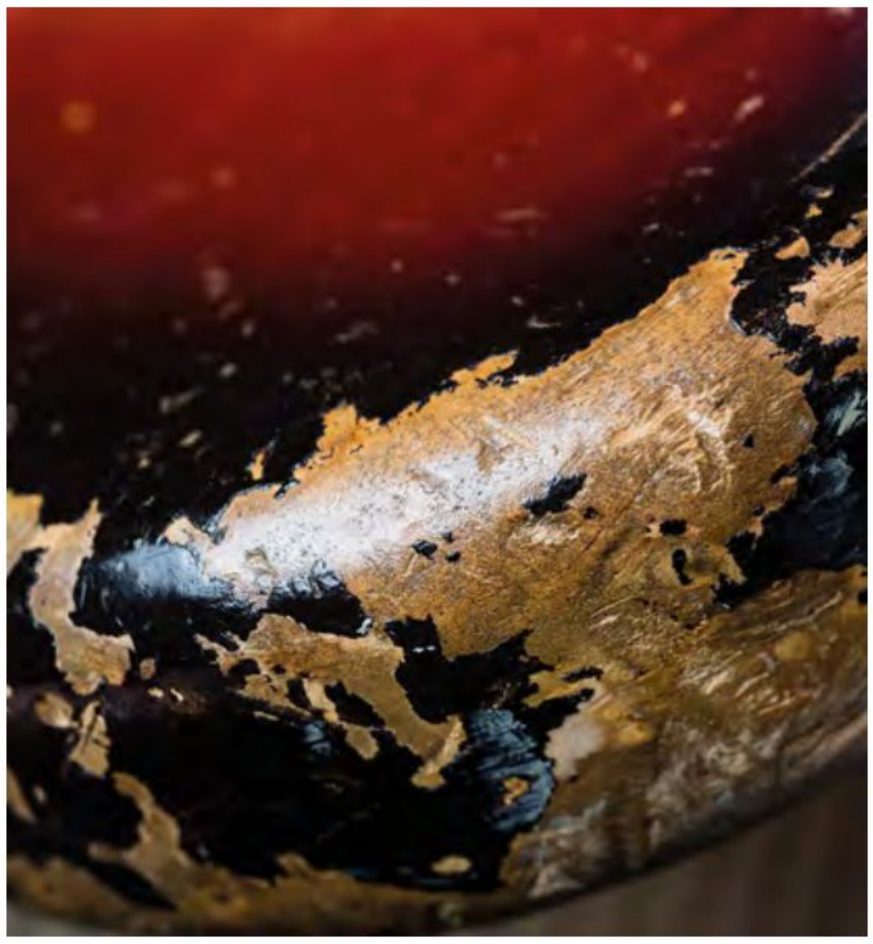
High over the achingly hip Los Angeles neighbourhood of Silver Lake, we wind our way up the driveway of Silvertop, the mid-century modern masterpiece that Luke Wood calls home. It was designed by John Lautner – the famed architect who cut his teeth under the tutelage of none other than Frank Lloyd Wright back in the 1930s and went on to create modernist structures including Elrod House in Palm Springs, better known as Willard Whyte's residence in *Diamonds Are Forever*. Wood and his wife, writer Sophia Nardin, bought Silvertop in late 2014 and carried out extensive renovations over the following three years.

The setting, with its panoramic views across LA and beyond, is as breathtaking as the daring concrete and glass structure itself, but before we head downstairs to check out Wood's studio space and gawk at his array of guitars, we wonder what inspired him to pick up the instrument in the first place. "I started playing guitar when I was eight years old," he remembers, "because I fell in love with Blondie's *One Way Or Another*. So my version of that was a Dunlop tennis racquet and a tie, in front of the mirror."

Before too long, he graduated to a real guitar – an Electra model with humbuckers and active electronics – but Rochester's northerly location on Lake Ontario meant it wasn't exactly a regular haunt for touring acts.

A pivotal moment of inspiration came courtesy of Chas Lockwood, guitarist in Invisible Party. One of the local bands Wood fell in love with as a

WorldMags.net



teenager, he remembers them sounding "exactly like Big Star meets The Modern Lovers".

Luke recalls Lockwood as "an incredible dude" who played a Strat and idolised Tom Verlaine. "I just started talking to him and I asked him, 'How do you become a guitar player?'. And he told me to listen to three records. He said, listen to *Marquee Moon*, listen to *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* and listen to Richard Thompson's *(guitar, vocal)*. So I honestly never had a guitar lesson, I just started playing along to those records."

GOING UNDERGROUND

This combination of angular and melodic sensibilities would become a common thread running through both Wood's own music – his band Sammy released two long players and an EP in the mid 90s and even performed on cult British TV show *The Word* – and the output of the artists he would go on to champion and develop. Another Damascene conversion came courtesy of The Velvet Underground, whom, Luke says, "changed my entire life – my intellectual life, my emotional life, my romantic life".

"Around the time I was maybe 15, I discovered *The Velvet Underground & Nico*," he reveals. "Y'know, I'm of a pre-internet age. It was incredibly hard to get the information. You couldn't just go and look up the chords online, you couldn't just go and look up what kind of guitars they played, it was like this treasure trove of information.

"So I would fly to New York City at 16 and just go diving through record stores and diving through the Strand Book Store, trying to find a fanzine on The Velvet Underground. And oh my god, what was The Factory and how did they make this? And who was that? So for me, it was wonderful, the discovery of what they were doing. And there was a sense of minimalism and restraint and also attitude."

WorldMags.net

The parallels with the grunge era are inescapable. "I think it was very similar," Wood agrees. "In the 80s, the American independent movement gave birth to groups like Hüsker Dü and The Replacements and R.E.M., which was kind of mirrored in the UK by The Cure and The Smiths and Echo & The Bunnymen. All of those bands wrote unbelievable arrangements, but maybe with the exception of Johnny Marr, who is interstellar, most of them were generally pretty straightforward guitar players. Nothing's super-fancy, y'know?

"And those were the bands, adding in the Pixies, that the groups that I was working with in the early 90s were referencing. And then a little bit of Sabbath… but the power of Sabbath."

Another thing that defined groups such as Sonic Youth, Nirvana and Teenage Fanclub was that they all knew exactly what they *didn't* want to sound like: "Everyone really cared about tone. But you wanted to sound different, because what you heard on the radio coming from Whitesnake, Metallica and Aerosmith was a very specific kind of thing.

"And fairly or unfairly, that became considered commercial. And obviously technique and facility was considered a very corporate thing, so just to

WorldMags.net

play a drop-D voicing, with one note, was super-punk."

Of all the bands with whom Wood worked, it was probably Nirvana who fought hardest to subvert the clichés of the corporate-rock mainstream. "I spent a lot of time with Kurt – especially when they made *In Utero*," Luke remembers. "I was around him quite a bit socially and there was a lot of downtime, so I would be over at his house, playing guitar a lot. We'd both be playing guitar and he was a phenomenally good melodic guitar player, but he was so shy about his facility. The trappings of commerce, of capitalism, of star-fucking, all of that stuff… it was not an act for him, he was deeply allergic to it. He didn't want anything to do with any of it. To him, all of that polluted the content of the narrative of the story he wanted to tell."

And for Cobain, this instinctive resistance to orthodoxy went way beyond guitars. "I was once so excited," laughs Luke. "I got to Hertz at Sea-Tac airport in Seattle and they upgraded me to a Cadillac. I'm like 22, so I'm like, 'This is dope, I've got a Cadillac'. So I drive up to Kurt's house – we were getting ready to do an interview or go to dinner or something – and he looks at the Cadillac and says, 'I'm not getting in it.' I said, 'What do you mean? This is funny! It's a Cadillac! How cool is this?' And he says, 'Fuck you, I'm not getting in it.' I had to drive back to Hertz and get a Taurus and go pick him up. He basically was like, 'I'm not Steven Tyler.'

"But really that's why I think he gravitated towards Mustangs and Jags and Mosrites – he was really contrarian to whatever was that super-technical guitar. Ironically, if you listen to *Nevermind*, the tone on that is fucking amazing.

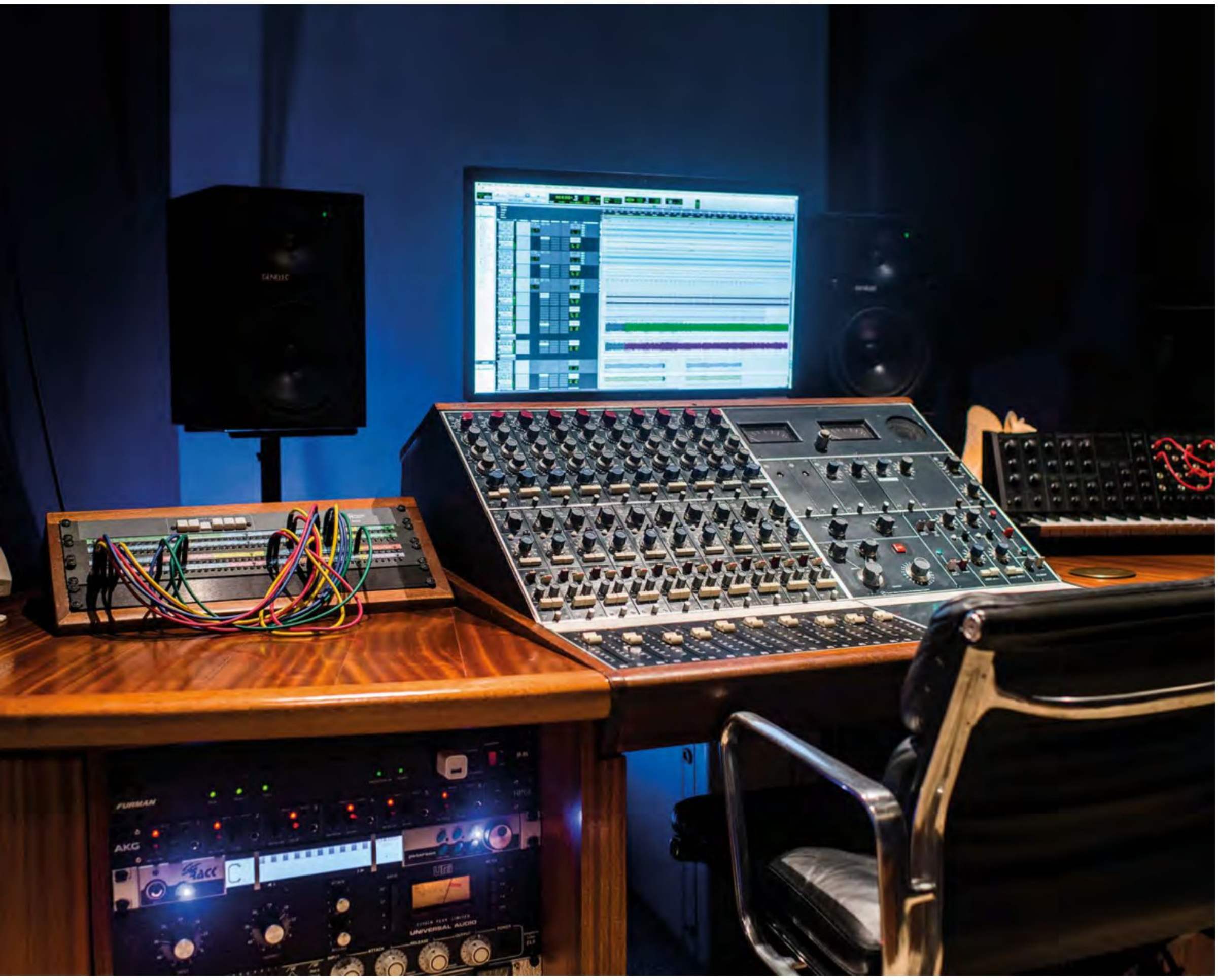
"Historically, a lot of artists destroyed their instruments but, you know, they get a Squier for that last song. Kurt wasn't built like that. He would take his favourite Jaguar and it would just go right through the cone and everyone had to deal with it later! And the next day, it would be like, 'We've got a show, what are we gonna do? We need a guitar!' It was really deeply chaotic, and often, especially on the percussion side, Kurt would destroy something of Dave's and Dave would be like, 'That's my drum set… what are you doing?'"

SECRET SHREDDERS

Two other guitarists Wood spent time around in the 1990s were Billy Corgan from The Smashing

THIS SPREAD Wood's 1964 Gibson Country Western is his 'burning building' guitar and it was used extensively by Elliott Smith. "I prefer to have my instruments in as much circulation as possible and played by as many people as possible," he says. "I just think they take on a reflection of the people that play them. They just become richer and richer as instruments. I know that sounds super spiritual and hippy but I really believe it. They are telling stories and it's a continuum of them."

WorldMags.net



Pumpkins and Rivers Cuomo of Weezer. The Beats mainman rates Corgan as the player from that era whose playing has best stood the test of time: "I was just obsessed with how he got those sounds on *Siamese Dream*. And the deeper I would go into it, the more calculated and meticulous – you realise this was really a complete thought for him. None of those tones were a mistake, it was super-calculated, he had amazing facility and I think the closest I've ever seen to anyone having complete muscle memory. And that's why those doubles are so tight."

Cuomo, too, is singled out for high praise: "I worked with Weezer when The Blue Album came out – and I remember meeting Rivers for the first time and having no real understanding of his back story and going into a rehearsal but then watching him just *shred*… he was as technical a player as I've ever worked with, in any genre. He could play almost anything, but the restraint he had – and Billy had that same thing – they would give you a riff or a hammer-on, or something that had such technical virtuosity that you would know was in 'em, but they would give it to you as like a passing note."

Like the punk movement that paved the way for it, 1990s alternative rock was a reaction against the

WorldMags.net

mainstream – but it still came with its own rulebook and dogma. Because the prevailing wind of the time was so anti-virtuosic, we wonder if players such as Corgan and Cuomo had no choice but to underplay their technical ability.

"Yeah, I think so," confirms Luke. "In truth, having come deeply from that scene – the American punk scene and the American indie-rock scene – those bands would not have been accepted. A good example – I think Stephen Malkmus from Pavement is a tremendous guitar player. He has really good tone and great melodic facility. I don't think most people in the world would ever say that about him, because he hid it so well! 90 per cent of what he did was just a throwaway because he wanted it to feel that way, he was so steeped in irony. The song *Fin* ends with this super-long solo, it's a gloriously beautiful melodic solo and the tone, the vibrato and the way he just plays it… it's like *Layla*, to me. It's so emotional.

"I think all of them were playing with artifice and irony and it was a really direct conversation with the commercialisation of rock 'n' roll. The whole point of rock 'n' roll was about antithesis. And then once it became commodified and once it became big business in the 70s, this whole thing had been appropriated.

"So I think people were really taking it back… and I think that's what was going on there. I think even though a lot of them had grown up maybe playing these incredible guitar solos, they wanted to hide it a little bit, which I understand. I almost thought it was like a super-power.

"Billy is different, because Billy has a more outward ego. The way he stands onstage, you could tell – 'I'm a guitar hero'. He's gonna say to you, you try to play this at home… watch! Whereas Rivers will never really go there, but he can play almost anything. He just had incredible restraint and would somehow go back to these garage chords. But he would do it in rehearsal – I remember him once literally playing *Eruption*. The whole thing. I was like, *'How do you know that?'*. I was used to working with Thurston and Lee from Sonic Youth, who were great guitar players, but they came from contemporary music, working with people like Rhys Chatham and very contemporary, academic music. The last thing they were gonna learn was *Eruption*!"

SCHOOL'S IN SESSION

The same could be said for Luke himself, whose guitar-playing tastes veer somewhat to the left of Van Halen.

"I was always very resistant to any kind of formal pedagogy," he admits, "because I was a little bit kind of punk rock, so I just felt like I didn't want that. And also I was very focused on writing songs. As a player, I was pretty true to artists like Jonathan Richman, Robert Quine, Tom Verlaine, Robert Lloyd. I'm not nearly as good as any of those players, but that's what I wanted to be.

"Quine is a great example. Just an incredibly angular, melodically beautiful, aggressive, smart guitar player. What I love about his playing and generally find interesting is – very similar to Sterling Morrison and Lou Reed in the Velvets – you get a little bit weird for a minute, then you get super-beautiful and melodic. I think it was always that contrast of the two things, where you are not sure what the guitarist is doing for a minute, then it hooks you.

"Then the other thing for me was just being really obsessed with the guitar as a counterpoint melodic instrument, so it almost becomes percussive. And that comes from me really loving Brian Eno, loving the Talking Heads and probably comes from funk music

ABOVE RIGHT Wood left the record industry in 2011 to work at Beats but says that "anyone who plays guitar should care about the headphone business – so much of what makes guitar music is in the counterpoint between left and right and the imaging". In recent years the company has leaned on the ears of seasoned audio professionals to refine its products, while Apple's resources have increased the depth of R&D

ABOVE LEFT Wood's go-to for guitar recording is a vintage Neumann U47: "Go in a studio today and find someone who is willing to put a 47 three feet away from a guitar amp. It doesn't exist. But I do it all the time. It sounded better for George Harrison… it probably sounds better for me, too!"

OPPOSITE The centrepiece of Wood's home studio is the Neve BCM10 console formerly owned by legendary pop-punk producer Jerry Finn

"SOMETIMES IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH TECHNICAL CAPACITY. IT HAS TO DO WITH THE ABILITY TO EMOTIONALLY CONNECT WITH THE SONG. IF YOU HAVE ALL THE RESOURCES IN THE WORLD BUT IT'S NOT IN HIS OR HER HANDS, YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET IT"

WorldMags.net

THIS SPREAD Luke's 1933 National resonator is a studio favourite, while he purchased his G&L ASAT from George Fullerton himself. The G&L once spent six months on the road with Girls Against Boys guitarist Scott McCloud, during the band's tour with Rage Against The Machine

and R&B. And then growing up through punk, I became a huge fan of the palm mute."

Wood may have not had any formal guitar tuition, but in many ways his time in recording studios as A&R and a label executive provided the best musical education it's possible to have, along with the chance to be involved in the creative process. Inevitably, there were politics to navigate: "Because I was an A&R person – I wasn't the producer, I wasn't the songwriter, I wasn't in the band, generally, even though I had a band – I realised very early on that one of the only ways to build a successful dialogue with the artist was never to ask for publishing.

"I always made it very clear up front, if I have an idea – if I say go to the VI minor instead of the IV chord there – I'm not gonna come back a month later and say, give me 10 per cent of the song. Take my ideas, throw 'em away, don't take them, whatever – I will never ask you for publishing, this is your music. My job as the record company is to try and make creative ideas that can potentially make it better, and it's for you to take them or throw them away, that's your job.

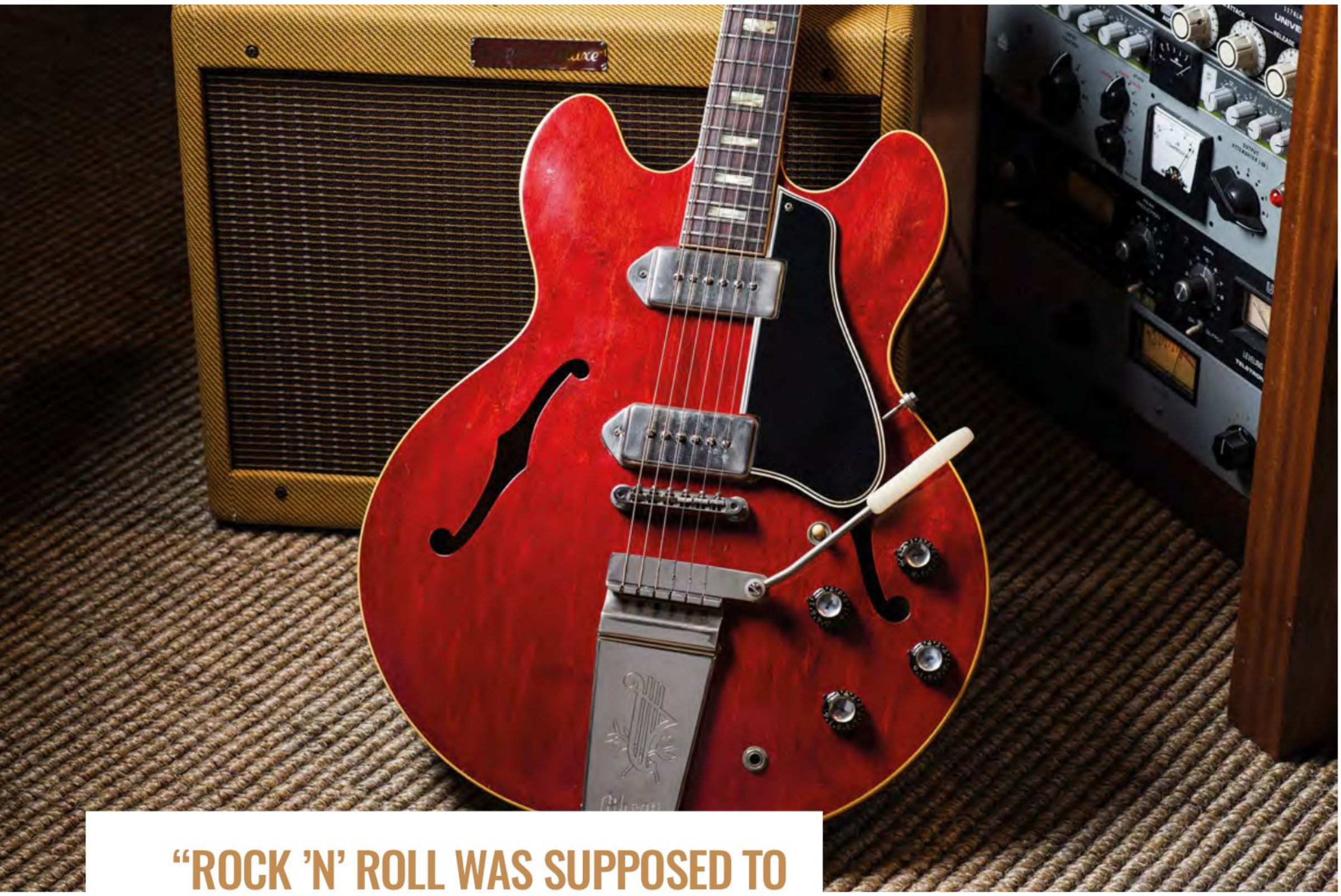
"But then the only way to have a rapport was to spend the time trying to be as quiet as possible on the couch and just listening and being in the room. Especially with producers. If you come in there and immediately you are like, 'The hi-hat sounds like it's out of phase with the tom mic', y'know they're gonna say, 'Get the fuck out of the room! We're immediately going to Reykjavík and we're making the record there!'

"But if you actually have the patience to sit on the couch, and at some point, six or seven hours into the third day you're still hanging out and they turn around and say, 'I can't decide, does the Deluxe sound better than the Bassman?', they are gonna turn to you and say, 'What do you think?' And you are gonna say, 'I think the Bassman has a little more tone on the bottom end,' and if you're right, they'll say, 'That's what I was thinking.' And then two minutes later, they say, 'What do you think of the 57 and the 421 on it?' 'I think the 421 sounds better.' 'Yeah, me too!' So you slowly build the dialogue and through doing that, you learn a lot and you're trusted. So that really developed my playing, watching all these other players and producers make records…"

And it has to be said, they weren't just any old records. "No, no, and it was at a time when there was a tremendous amount of capital to make these records. Back then, we would be in the studio with

WorldMags.net

INPUT
OUTPUT
Distressor
GAIN REDUCTION
BYPASS
RATIO
RATIO
DETECTOR
Link
1176LN PEAK LIMITER
UNIVERSAL AUDIO
ATTACK
RELEASE
OUTPUT
OUTPUT
ATTENUATOR (dB)
PEAK
REDUCTION
POWER
Demaria Labs



"ROCK 'N' ROLL WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OPPOSITIONAL. IT WAS INVENTED AS A RESPONSE TO YOUR PARENTS' MUSIC. IT WAS A RESPONSE TO THIS VERY MUNDANE, SUPER-SAFE MUSIC THAT WAS RELATIVELY INAUTHENTIC IN TERMS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE"

THIS PAGE Wood picked up this 1965 Gibson ES-330 at the same time as two other examples, both of which ended up being used by Elliott Smith

an arsenal, a king's riches of amps. Every vintage AC30, Plexi, Deluxe, Twin. You bring in the coffins of guitars. What do you want? Bring them all. 30 guitars.

"So you got to sit there, listening to *everything*. And you quickly realise, oh… I see what the Les Paul Junior P-90 does through that amp versus a regular Les Paul, or I see why the Tele works better there."

HANDS ON DESK

As Luke's career developed, he found himself engineering sessions and even sat in the producer's chair, sometimes out of necessity. "I was a highly involved, creative A&R executive. I would produce when I had to, I would engineer a lot to finish the records up because we'd run out of budget – so it would be like, okay, we're done but we're basically out of budget and we still haven't finished overdubbing the guitars. But I worked with super-talented artists and always felt like there should be a better producer in the world than me." While manning the mixing board, the biggest lesson Wood learned creatively was that it all starts and ends with the human link in the signal chain.

"I was in Burbank in about '96-'97 working with an artist," he remembers, "and I pulled in piles of gear, we had a big recording budget. I think I was co-producing the session, and after about six or seven hours with the guitar, we just couldn't get there. So it was one of those things where you're endlessly like, try the other pickup, try the rear pickup, try the middle pickup, change the ground, okay, put the presence up, put the presence down, phase-invert the mics, let's try the 57, let's try the 421, let's try the Coles.

"You are sitting there for *hours* and it's not quite sitting in the track. And I remember at one point we were sitting there and getting frustrated and talking about going back to the menu book to order more food! I was like, 'Alright, let's try it again, plug in the Telecaster instead of the Strat, tune up, okay, go, go, play!' And all of a sudden the sound was coming back through and it was like fucking magic! It was just heaven!

"It was a rhythm part and I'm just like, 'That's it! Don't do anything! What did you change?' And it was the other guitar player playing the part! I was like… 'Oh! The musician!' And that was the most important lesson I ever learned in making music. It really is about the emotion of the player.

"And honestly, sometimes it has nothing to do with their technical capacity. It just has to do with their

WorldMags.net

ability to emotionally connect with the storytelling of the song. So it really starts with the player. I could spend all day long saying coated head, uncoated head, flatwound, round-wound, you know what I mean? Which tube do I want? If you have all the resources in the world but it's not in his or her hands, you're not gonna get it."

BETWEEN THE BARS

Of all the amazing experiences he's had in the music industry, Luke cites working with Elliott Smith as the most precious. "Nothing can come close to comparing with that experience. I first reached out to him when I heard his first seven-inch. He wasn't interested in a record deal at the time, he was in this group called Heatmiser, but he was super-polite and he was genuinely humbled that someone from a major label would call him. He pressed like 500 of a seven-inch and he was like, 'I can't believe a major label is calling me about my stupid seven-inch, that's just ridiculous!'

"But three years later, his career progressed and we reached out to him again and signed him to DreamWorks, and made XO and made *Figure 8*. And about two thirds of the demos for *Figure 8* he did at my old house in Silver Lake. So he would be recording all day by himself and I would come home at night and sit with him and hear them.

"I went back the first day Elliott did it and he was working on *Junk Bond Trader*. I had at the time a Mackie board, and he basically had the whole demo tracked on ADAT, but he was working on the final guitar part. He had the Jazzmaster and he was going through my '62 Princeton, and it was, y'know, far back, bridge pickup, *super-bright*! And I'm just like, 'Oh, this is a *disaster*! This guy has no idea how to engineer!'

"He'd worked with Tom Rothrock and Rob Schnapf, so I knew him in the big recording studio when he made XO, I didn't know him as a guy just doing all the engineering. He played drums on there – everything was on there; drums, bass, Mellotron, the whole thing, right? And I'm hearing this part and I'm sitting there and he says, 'Let me just finish tracking this.' And I'm going, this is going to be a disaster… a *disaster*! And then he unmutes the other parts and he plays it back and he'd perfectly EQ'd it to track. I was like, I've never heard anyone do that in my life. To have the ability to pre-EQ the entire record!

"He could sit at the piano and play Rachmaninoff, he could sit and play deep Delta blues, he could play real Appalachian riffs, he could play any kind of Woody Guthrie folk music, he could play all kinds of 70s proto-metal, he knew prog-rock, he could play you a Rush solo, Elliott knew Yes! He knew all this music. But I didn't know he had that ear, y'know, and I think that really taught me a lot."

Smith seems to have been one of those rare, almost supernatural talents who had the whole arrangement for a song fleshed out in his head before hitting record. "I can only imagine it must have been the same with Brian Wilson," says Luke, "where you just have one person that has the whole picture. But to have that ability to pre-EQ, to know, okay, my voice is going to sit here, so if I just notch everything below like 3kHz, and put the guitar here… obviously, George Martin and The Beatles were doing that a lot because they were tracking to two-track or four-track at times, but Elliott had that gift.

"And he also had that gift of being sweet and beautiful and also being punk and being oppositional

THIS PAGE Wood's Fender Custom Shop baritone Telecaster is a one-off made especially for him, while his Guild S-100 dates from 1970

WorldMags.net

WorldMags.net

“I THINK THE GUITAR IS BECOMING MORE OF A CONTROLLER ITSELF. EFFECTS ARE SO BEAUTIFUL RIGHT NOW – PEOPLE ARE REALISING, OKAY, THE GUITAR IS MY CONTROLLER, MY PEDALBOARD IS MY SOUND”

and aggressive and doing them all on an acoustic guitar. He could do a pass of something that would be the punkest thing I’ve ever heard, on an acoustic, then he’d do a pass and try it, just to lighten up, and it would sound like late-60s, early 70s Laurel Canyon – beautiful folk music. He knew *exactly* what he was doing.”

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Luke’s role as president of Beats places him at the epicentre of contemporary music consumption, so we wonder how he feels about the guitar’s shifting role in popular culture.

“I think that music is obviously more important than ever before because of its availability,” he asserts. “It’s everywhere. And I think that people have a much more diverse palate – especially than when I was younger. We were extremely stratified in terms of genre, and it was tied into your identity of who you were in the world. Are you a mod or a rocker? Are you punk, new wave or are you metal? It doesn’t really exist any more. It’s all one thing.

“What I find with a lot of contemporary pop songwriters in all genres, these songwriters are writing hooks for hip-hop, pop music, even EDM – they are writing on guitar. Because they write a different kind of song than they do just sitting down at the controller, which they’ve been doing for 10 years. They don’t want to sit down at the controller again, because you naturally go to the same places. Whereas the guitar has certain limitations and it frustrates you, in a good way. And I think the guitar is becoming more of a controller itself. Effects are so beautiful right now – people are realising, okay, the guitar is my controller, my pedalboard is my sound.

“And that’s very different than when I grew up, which was basically the amp and the guitar was the sound. I think it’s good – it’s driving a lot of improvisation and a lot of improbability and a lot of weird things. The more weird stuff you introduce, you respond to that and it pushes you somewhere else.

“With the deep innovation in the world of effects, algorithms are getting better and they’re doing weirder things and especially more and more effects that are now tempo-aligned. It allows you to create sounds that we never had before and then you react to that. For myself and other people I work with, I loop a lot of things, cut a lot of things up, use found sounds, re-amp things.

“One great trick that I get people to do all the time is, get a sound of something, play it back through your speakers, pull out your iPhone, voice record it and then send it back into the computer. And suddenly, it feels completely different. Because then it’s going to strike you emotionally, and then if you cut it up into literally almost an eight-note loop, then it becomes a percussive element. It’s forcing people to go farther.

“After writing 20 songs for an album on electric guitar, lock it up in your car and write 10 more on an acoustic guitar. And now go to your mom’s house

THIS PAGE The Vox V262 Invader is a rare beast equipped with unique-sounding onboard effects – ideal for providing inspiration in the studio

WorldMags.net

ABOVE This Fireglo 1982 Rickenbacker 450 was Wood's first 'proper' electric guitar

for the weekend and write 10 songs on her shitty piano. 'But I don't play piano!' Doesn't matter. The way the voicings, the sounds, the percussiveness, the way it feeds back to you emotionally, you write very different music.

"Rock 'n' roll was supposed to be oppositional. Rock 'n' roll was invented as a response to your parents' music. It was a response to this very mundane, super-safe music that was relatively inauthentic in terms of human experience. If you think about those Brill Building show tunes, they are beautifully written, but love was never that simple. At least not in my life! Love was always a messy, complicated, sometimes beautiful, sometimes dirty thing.

"Rock 'n' roll came along and was an expression of post-World War II youth culture, saying, we're going to take our own culture, we're not just going to listen to Perry Como, we're not gonna listen to show tunes. We're going to write about sex and being angry and being upset and driving for change. Whether it was Dylan or Chuck Berry. That was the nature of rock music, so we have to continue to push it forward." Amen to that. ***G***

WorldMags.net

MARIPOSA

Introducing the all new Ernie Ball Music Man Mariposa Deluxe in Imperial White.
An artist collaboration with world-renowned composer & guitarist Omar Rodríguez-López.

ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN

WorldMags.net

Mister Motivator

As a solo artist, session player and the guitarist in Vulfpeck, Cory Wong has made it his mission to bring fun and virtuosity to modern funk guitar. As he unleashes his latest solo album, *Motivational Music For The Syncopated Soul*, we spoke to the ebullient Strat-slinger about the importance of working on instinct, how he's learned to make rhythm guitar the star of the show – and why there is such a thing as too much chocolate cake…

WORDS JOSH GARDNER

Cory Wong always seems to be having a good time. Whether he's laying down the rhythm with US funk sensations Vulfpeck, going out as an elite guitarist-for-hire, or fronting his own solo projects, the Minnesota-raised player's goofy grin and boundless energy seem as ever-present as they are infectious. He's even made an album called *The Optimist*, for crying out loud.

Having a conversation with the man only reinforces that impression. Like a well-shaken Coke can of ideas, he doesn't so much answer a question as he erupts – enthusiastically taking you on a ride through the lessons and wisdom he's accrued on his journey to becoming a very 2019 kind of guitarist.

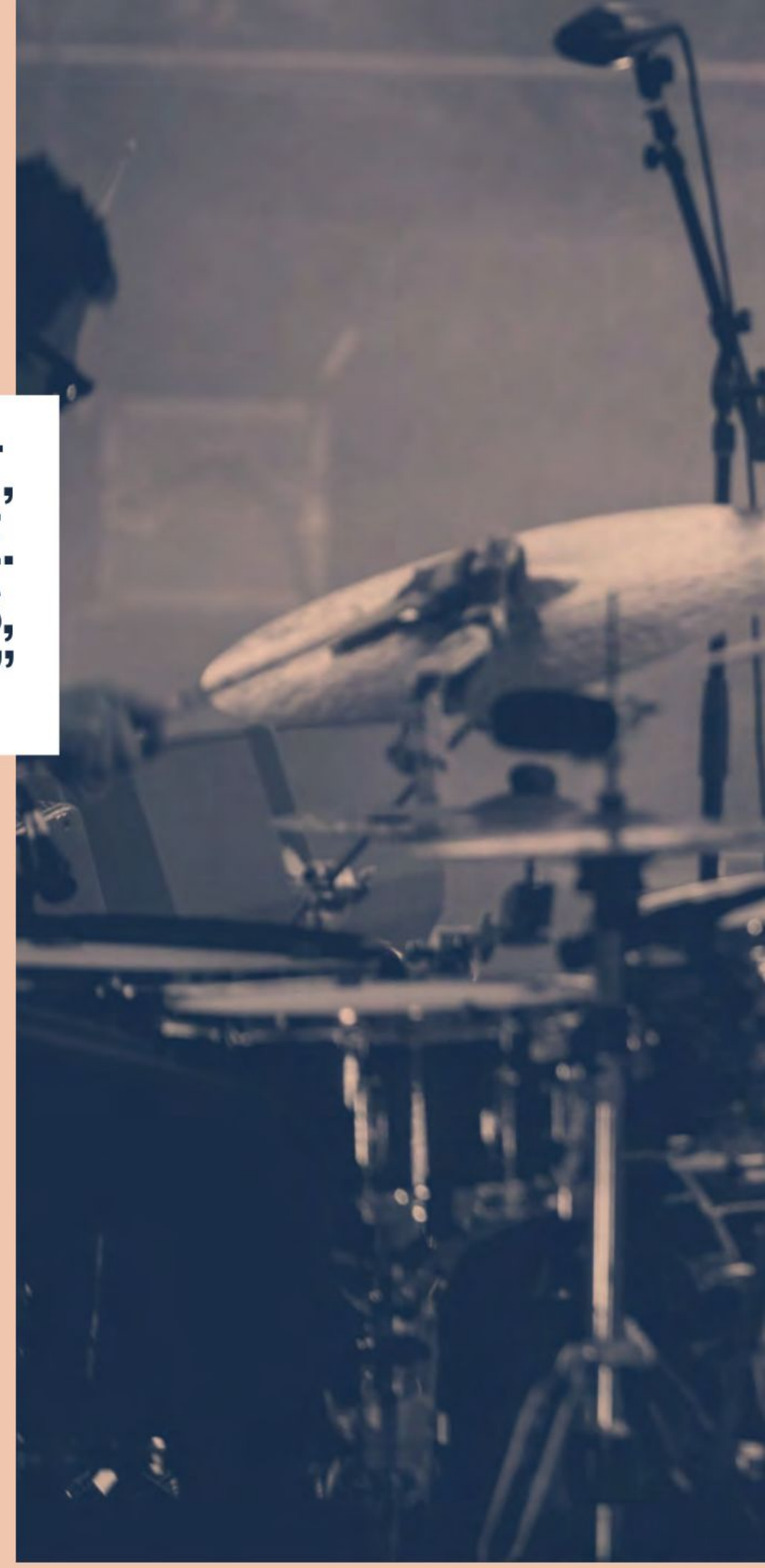
And that's what makes him interesting. In an era when outside commentators queue up to pronounce the death of the instrument on a seemingly annual basis, Wong and those like him are evolving what it means to be a guitar hero.

Instead of the hoary old staples of monster guitar solos and hard-rock posturing, these new-breed guitar players are bringing fierce chops and impressive ingenuity to hip-hop, soul, R&B and funk. In the case of Wong himself, he's doing it in a way that marks him out as something extremely out of the ordinary – a bona-fide virtuoso rhythm guitarist.

"That's funny. You're absolutely right," Wong chuckles when we observe that traditionally, the title of 'rhythm guitarist' is not so much a badge of honour as a derogatory term. "Some people are like, 'Oh dude, I don't want to be the *rhythm* player – I wanna be the lead guy!' But there is a way you can do both!

"My biggest inspiration on guitar is Dave Williams and his stuff with Michael Jackson. There's this interview with him from back in the early 90s, or late

“WHEN I PLAY A STRAT, IT JUST FEELS LIKE MY VOICE. I LOVE OTHER GUITARS, BUT THE STRAT IS JUST HOME”



80s that I once watched. And in it, he’s saying: ‘One of the things that I did is I took rhythm guitar and brought it to the forefront.’ And I’m thinking, ‘Oh, my gosh, that’s exactly what I had in mind!’

“My other big inspiration is Paul Jackson Jr, who also played on a bunch of Michael Jackson stuff. I remember as a teenager, I had this old DVD, *Paul Jackson Jr: The Science Of Rhythm Guitar*.

“He talked a lot about how everybody wants to be a lead player, but nobody realises that if you’re an actual working musician, you’re practising 90 per cent of your time on lead and only 10 per cent practising rhythm. But it’s completely the flip-flop of what the reality is in the real world! Because 95 per cent of the playing you’re doing is rhythm and five per cent is lead. And I really connected with that.

“So I learned to take these percussive rhythm-guitar parts and make them catchy enough that they are hooks, and make them melodic enough that they’re hooks. And boom, I found my formula – that’s how we solve the dilemma of the rhythm guitar being the ‘lead’ instrument.”

MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS

This formula provides the bedrock for Wong’s third studio solo album, the aptly titled *Motivational Music For The Syncopated Soul*. Relentlessly funky and sunny, with his trademark percussive lead/rhythm fusion constantly accented by horns, organs and the occasional vocal, it’s a compelling manifesto for where the guitar fits in pop music in 2019.

“On my previous records and albums, I was kind of thinking, ‘Alright, what kind of artistic statement do I want to make? What is my fingerprint?’ And I’ve been kind of developing that and discovering my voice over the last few years – and I feel like on this record, I have a more realised idea of that,” he explains.

“You hear a lot of ‘guitar’ records and most of them, it’s like, ‘Here’s a guitar album… tonnes of shredding and guitar gymnastics and guitar fireworks everywhere!’ And that’s impressive, that’s cool. I like those things, and I can do those things, too – I can pull out the fireworks when I need to. But it’s not necessarily what moves me as a musician, and as a person. I have seen some of my favourite guitar players live. And they’re doing a ‘guitar show’ for three hours or two hours, whatever it is. And like, 90 minutes in, I’m thinking to myself, ‘Alright… I need to hear something different. I can’t *just* hear guitar!’ I can’t eat chocolate cake all day – I gotta have something else, y’know?

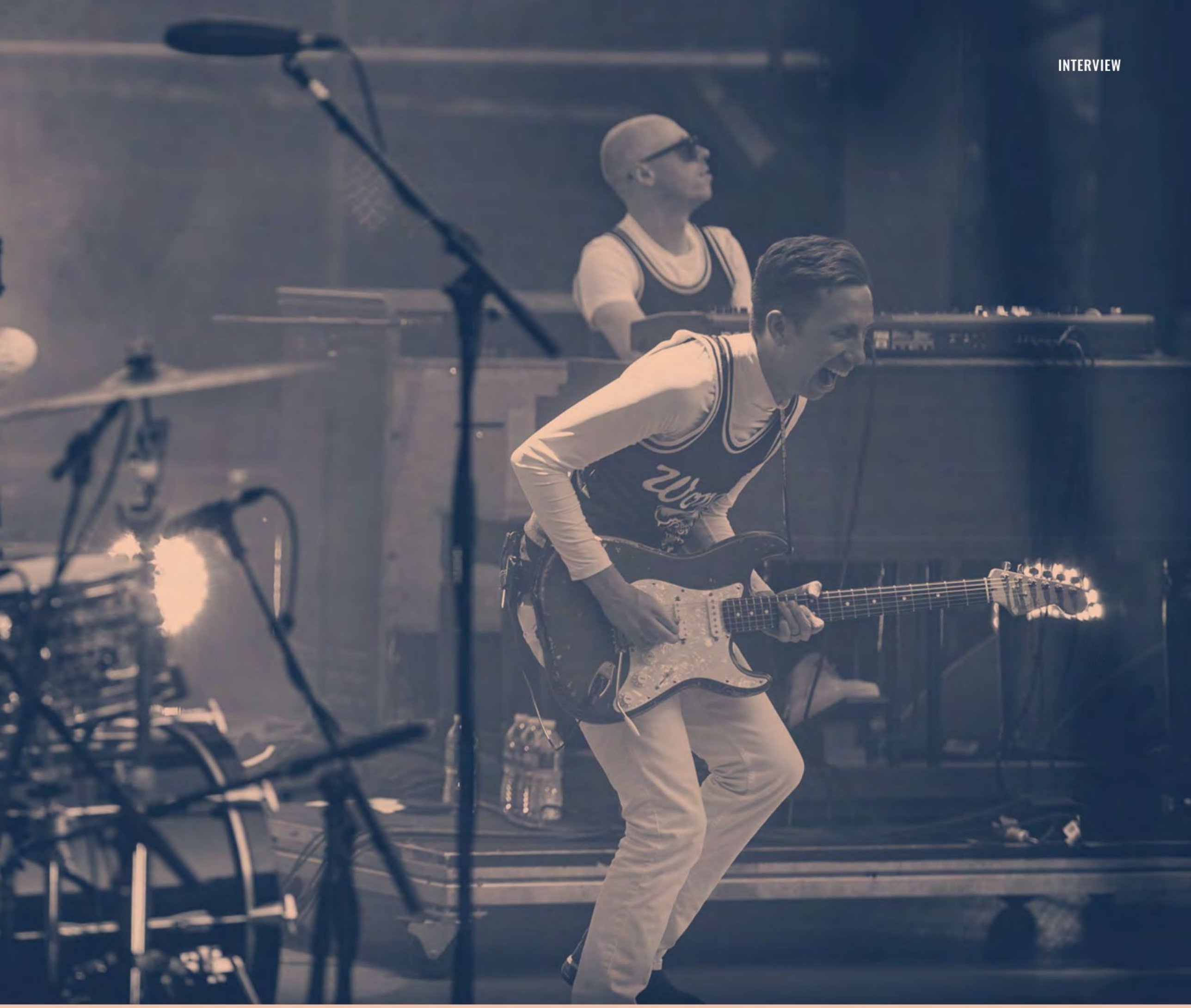
“I wouldn’t say that everybody who’s doing that is ego-driven, but for me, I think it might be! If I was like, ‘Here’s what I can do on the guitar! Check it out! All bow down to my ability!’ It’s like, ‘Ahh, that doesn’t feel right…’

Instead, Cory has to make guitar-centric records that don’t lean on the crutches of blazing solos and flash, while still being interesting, inventive and technically impressive.

“I have to try to reconcile what that looks like, y’know?” he shrugs. “A lot of what I do, is not like the ‘overt chops’. It’s not one of those things where you listen to it and you’re like, ‘Damn! That guy is *insane*! I like to think of it more as ‘covert chops’. You listen to it and it’s like, ‘Oh wow, that’s cool,’ and seems like something that’s very approachable… but then when you sit down to play it, it’s like, ‘Oh… that’s actually really hard!’

“I feel like I’m able to do something more compelling with the rhythm side than the lead side, because there are so many guys that are doing just

WorldMags.net



the lead thing, and they're crushing the lead thing! So why should I bother getting into that sphere – plenty of those guys have that taken! So why don't I take *this* role and make this role shine – and show the world with this type of playing can do and how to bring the lead to the forefront?"

MISCH TAKES

Perhaps the most dynamic and compelling example of this concept on *Motivational Music For The Syncopated Soul* is *Cosmic Sans* – a duet with British jazz-pop sensation Tom Misch that sees the pair go toe to toe in a rhythm and lead funk-off for the ages.

"Tom and I connected in the most Millennial, 2019 way… Instagram!" Cory chuckles. "We became internet guitar buddies! It's such a funny and cool thing that we can do that nowadays. Even 10 years ago, that just wouldn't have happened.

"He was in LA for a couple weeks, and he was just like, "Hey man, I've got this Airbnb, there's a little studio in the back. Why don't you come over, and let's do a tune together?' So I went over there and I wanted it to feel like 'guitar buddies hanging out'. And that's exactly what it was! I met him in person and 30 minutes later, the song was recorded.

"We started jamming and he's like, 'Should we record this?' 'Yeah! Let's do it!' I was going through my Wampler Ego compressor, direct into a UA Apollo, and Tom was going literally direct, because he has this huge pedalboard… but his converter wouldn't work with US power!

"So he's like, 'Aw man, I wanted to use my envelope filter on this!' And I was like, 'Well, let's pull up an envelope filter in Logic!' It was a classic case of, 'This exact piece of gear doesn't really matter, let's just use our ears.' We're big boys here. We're adults. We're professionals! It's one of those things where we could have easily been overthinking the entire process."

This knack for being ready to go at the drop of a hat has been honed in Cory's most high-profile gig as the rhythm guitarist in Vulfpeck (despite being a constant presence on tour and on their last two records, he's still not an official member of the band), where the band's always-on dynamic leaves no room for passengers.

"Somebody will come in with a song idea, or Jack [Stratton] will say, 'Hey, Cory, send me that demo…' and he'll listen to it and then all of a sudden, it's like, 'Alright, A section, let's play it. B section, let's play it!'

From the moment he upgraded from a Gretsch Traveling Wilburys model, the Strat has felt like home to Cory

WorldMags.net

Cory has a varied diet of gigs – from Nashville sessioneer to Vulfpeck's guitar maestro

Boom! And 20 minutes later, it's what you hear on the album," Cory explains. "It means that every take, we're playing for keeps. If it was one of those sessions where I treated it like, 'I'll take my time, we'll get into, we play this thing down about 10 times and then we'll get it…' Well take one could be the take that ends up going on the album, so I'd better make sure I'm playing for keeps every time!"

NASHVILLE SOUL

The professionalism and focus required for working in that way hasn't come out of nowhere – as a young man Cory left his hometown of Minneapolis to try to cut in perhaps the most insanely competitive and demanding environment a musician could hope to find: the Nashville session scene.

"It's such a great environment and I'm thankful that I had a lot of good mentors," Cory reflects. "There's so many elements that you need to hone in on in a split second in the session world and you need to be so deep inside it. A lot of times, the producer will play you a demo once, and you've never heard this song before. And as you're listening to it, you need to chart it out, so you can go in that room as soon as the song is done and play it down perfectly!

"But not only do you have to be able to play the song down, you need to be able to play parts that are like 'signature' guitar parts. It's not just like, 'Okay, this is a song that goes from G to C to E minor to D…' It's like, 'Okay, how many *hundred*s of songs are that? What's going to make this song 'signature'? What's going to make my part stand out when people turn this song on?

"But the only way to get really good at that is lots of reps and lots of instinct. And the more reps you get, the more you're going to hone your instincts."

Working in the demanding and no-nonsense session world also helped Cory to develop a thick skin when it came to his guitar playing, as he learned to accept that he was crafting parts for someone else, not for him. "If they say, 'That's not what I'm looking for,' it doesn't mean you're a bad guitar player, it means they're looking for something different!" he exclaims. "I've been in the situation where there's two guitar players on a job and you don't want to be the guy who's overdubbing for an hour on one song!

"The producer is saying that they're wanting something different and then that guy starts to get offended… and then all of a sudden, it's personal. But dude, don't take it personally! It's that the artist and the producer are wanting to convey a message and right now the guitar part and tone that you're playing is not getting that message across.

"Not because it's bad, not because what you're doing is wrong. It's because so much of music and art is subjective and they're looking for something else, to convey the message they want. All of those lessons that I've learned have helped inform me in my decisions as the leader of the band."

STRAT MASTER

As befits a man who swims deep in the groovy waters of funk, Cory is rarely seen on stage without a Stratocaster – and one Strat in particular. Cory's Sapphire Blue Highway One model might not be the most high-end guitar for a globe-trotting guitarist to trust every night, but this one has been his faithful companion for a long time.

"I've had this guitar since high school – my first real guitar was a Strat," he explains. "I wanted to play guitar so bad. I went to a pawn shop as a sixth grader and bought a Gretsch Traveling Wilburys guitar – they're still out there somewhere! It was this $75 used guitar and it didn't stay in tune. It's probably actually a nice guitar, but the one that I had… well there's a reason why it was sitting in a pawn shop!"

But Cory persisted with his ungainly Gretsch, all the while badgering his dad to buy him a real guitar, desperate to convince him that this wasn't a passing infatuation. "By that time, I'm in seventh grade. I've got a punk-rock band. I'm playing with my friends, and I said, 'I have this much money saved up. And I'm wondering if we combined Christmas and my birthday and everything else…' And I live in Minnesota, so I was like, 'If I shoveled the driveway 100 times this winter… could you buy me a guitar?'

"And my dad says, 'Alright, but here's the deal – you need to get a Stratocaster.' 'Okay, why?' 'Well, look at Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Nile Rodgers…' he's listing off all these legends. 'I rest my case!' And I'm like, 'Okay, cool.'

"So I got a Strat, and here we are, it just feels like home. When I play a Strat, it just feels like my voice. I love other guitars, but the Strat is just home." **G**

Cory Wong's *Motivational Music For The Syncopated Soul* is out now

WorldMags.net

NGS Ltd presents

The MERSEYSIDE Guitar SHOW 2019

AINTREE RACECOURSE EXHIBITION CENTRE

ORMSKIRK RD, LIVERPOOL, L9 5AS

SUNDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2019

10AM TO 4.00PM

BUY, SELL & TRADE
NEW, VINTAGE AND USED GUITARS, AMPS, EFFECTS AND ACCESSORIES

Merseyside's biggest show yet with more than 100 exhibitors

Loads of stuff you won't see in the shops - SPECIAL SHOW BARGAINS FOR XMAS

FREE PARKING. EASY MOTORWAY ACCESS
2 MINS FROM AINTREE TRAIN STATION AND BUSES

ADMISSION | ACCOMPANIED UNDER 12'S FREE **£7.00**

Licensed Bar & Cafe
www.guitarshows.co.uk
Email: peter@guitarshows.co.uk
Telephone: 07403 346409

Show Sponsors

Musicians' Union, jhs, PMT Professional Music Technology, Reflex Print Solutions, Acoustic Review, Guitar.com, Promenade Music, Pedalpatch, Mooer Effects and Amplification, Hercules, L.R. Baggs, Ernie Ball

PA provided by BOSE PROFESSIONAL

Drums provided by AMPLIFIRE

FREE PRIZE DRAW

Win this Vintage VSA500PM Relssued Semi-Acoustic - Natural Maple worth £399

PLUS runners-up prizes of Guitar Magazine sunscriptions

NORTHERN GUITAR SHOWS SPONSORS

FRET-King, Vintage, BluGuitar TONE INNOVATION, DANELECTRO, Supro

Superb LIVE Music & Workshops

VINTAGE GUITARS presents

CARRIE MARTIN

Contemporary acoustic-based Folk/Rock – original songs, great playing and haunting vocals

Back by popular demand
The sensational

AZIZ IBRAHIM ESQ.

(ex Stone Roses, Asia and many others)

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
LOTTERY FUNDED

THE ANDY BENNETT BAND

Three-piece powerhouse
Raw, explosive, classic musicality

Working with Bose Professional Systems

THE HUERS

Folk duo - Great playing, superb songs and amazing harmonies.

DEMO ROOMS: VERVE guitar legend NICK McCABE will demo Lucem Guitars Silver Series for their pre-launch event.

Scott Dixon Inc cabinets feature workshop performances by JOHN VERITY and ROGER INNISS.

PLUS MCCRERIE GUITARS, SAI AMPS, GORDON SMITH AND AUDEN GUITARS

WorldMags.net

PANCAKE DAY

WorldMags.net

How a deal for a Tweed Champ led to a chance encounter with a nicotine-stained Fender Jazzmaster destined to be its owner's one guitar to rule them all…

WORDS MICHAEL JAMES ADAMS
PHOTOGRAPHY ELEANOR JANE

Michael first met this 1961 Jazzmaster when a deal for a Fender Champ took an unexpected twist…

It's a truism you'll hear from members of an unlikely but perfectly matched couple, from a friend finding success at a dream job far from home, or as it escapes your own lips as you choose a new puppy at the local shelter – "When you know, you know." More often than not, it really does seem that one's initial gut instinct is correct and learning to trust that is a skill that comes in handy when it's finely tuned. Speaking from personal experience, I find that it can also apply to guitars.

I first met 'Pancake' in the blustery Pacific Northwest winter of 2012, while on a guitar-shop excursion from Seattle to Portland. It's a trip we often took in the early days of Mike & Mike's Guitar Bar, wherein myself and co-founder Mike Ball would scour Craigslist, mine reports from our Oregonian sources and plan a few days away accordingly.

On this particular day, our day of gear hunting had brought us to the home of a chap trying to offload a 50s Fender Champ that appeared to be in great shape. We agreed on a price, and as is customary for any deal I make, I asked: "Got anything else for sale?"

Our gracious host replied: "Oh yeah, I have this shitty guitar that barely works, I never play it. I'll go get it." He disappeared quickly into a stairwell to the basement while Other Mike and I exchanged excited glances. Statistically speaking, we were rolling the dice; there was no telling what he was dragging up from beneath our feet. Fender? Gibson? Walmart special? It was anybody's guess until he reappeared with what was clearly a nicotine-stained brown Fender case. As they say, "When you know, you know." And right then and there, I knew I was about to meet the guitar of my lifetime.

Thanks to our specialisation in Fender Jazzmasters, we knew the shape of that case like the back of our hands: a little taller and wider than that of a Strat or a Tele, but this one was mightily dirty. I caught my breath as he opened the case and for the life of me, I don't think I ever got it back.

Inside was a 1961 Fender Jazzmaster, its original sunburst finish beat to hell and reeking like a Philip Morris convention. It would later take weeks of airing out the case and a few rounds of deep cleaning of the guitar to get rid of the smell.

The neck pickup didn't work and, just like the case, the guitar was caked with dirt and clearly hadn't been used in some time. It was way out of adjustment. To keep a long story short, the negotiation began: he named his price, which was high; I named mine, which was much lower; he quoted an eBay price, and I pointed out that the listing was for a mint example. I knew I had to have that guitar, but I wasn't paying an astronomical price. So we left without it.

HARD BARGAIN

We took a lunch break to cool off and even though I was eating, I didn't taste a thing – my mind was stuck on that Jazzmaster. The skinny neck fit my hand perfectly and the chocolate-coloured Brazilian rosewood fretboard felt so slinky and slightly oily in a way that I just couldn't shake. The bridge pickup was loud and robust and even though it wasn't in great condition, I could see its potential to be a great guitar.

WorldMags.net

It took weeks of airing out the case and a few rounds of deep cleaning to get rid of the smell of nicotine

I ran the numbers in my head: guitars of this condition go for this consistent price, how far would I expect him to go for a sale? Does he want cash today? There was this much in the bank account… and so on.

I spent the afternoon in a calculating haze as if I were the John Forbes Nash Jr of guitars, time passing by all around me but never partaking, frozen in a thousand-yard stare. Eventually, I snapped out of it and with Mike's encouragement, I made a follow-up call to see if we could meet somewhere in the middle.

To my surprise, he was willing to come down, but still not enough in my mind. As well as we were doing in those days, I didn't have *that* much scratch to throw around. Plus, he was right: the guitar didn't really work. Would it need the pickups rewound, or had there been some tomfoolery under the hood? So once again, I said no and told him to call back if he could budge any further.

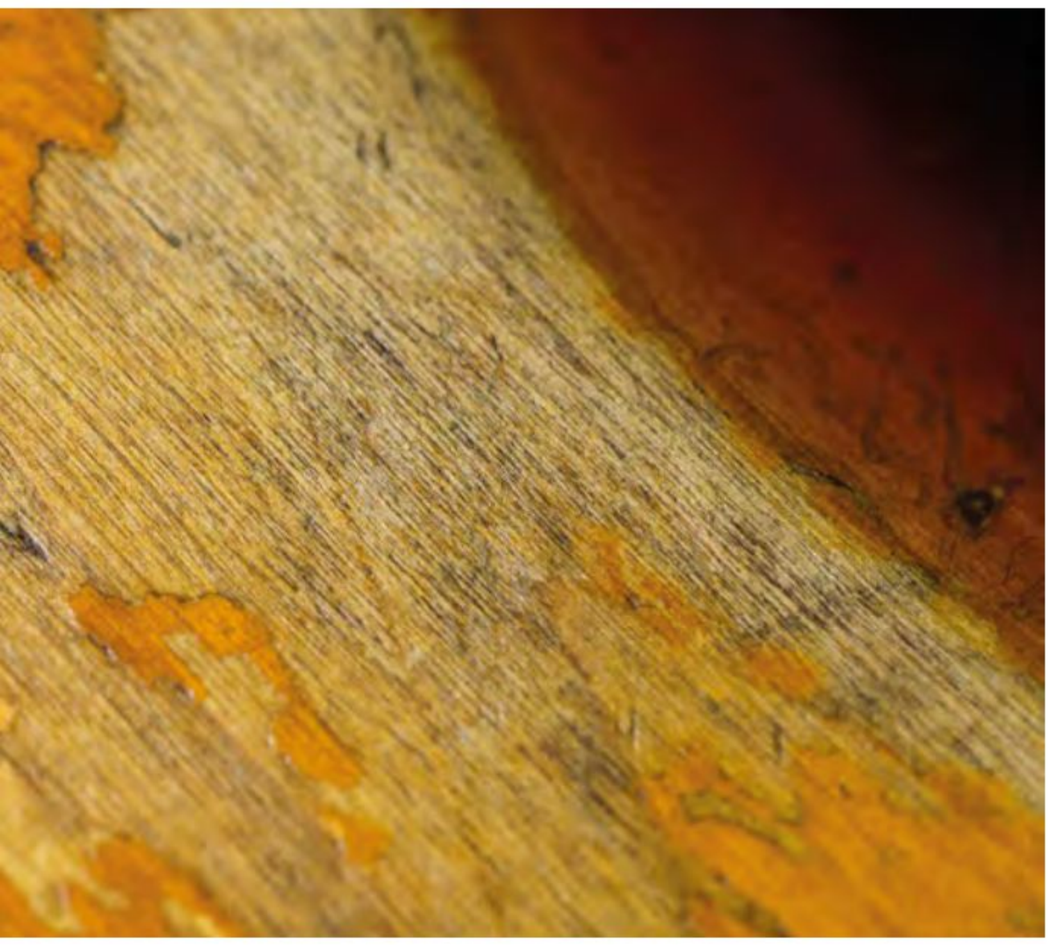
A little while later, slightly depressed at going away empty handed, Mike and I decided to head home. Just as I was merging onto the highway, my phone rang. On the other end was the owner of the guitar, telling me: "Okay, I'll do it for this much, but you have to take my 70s Big Muff for $250 on top." Done.

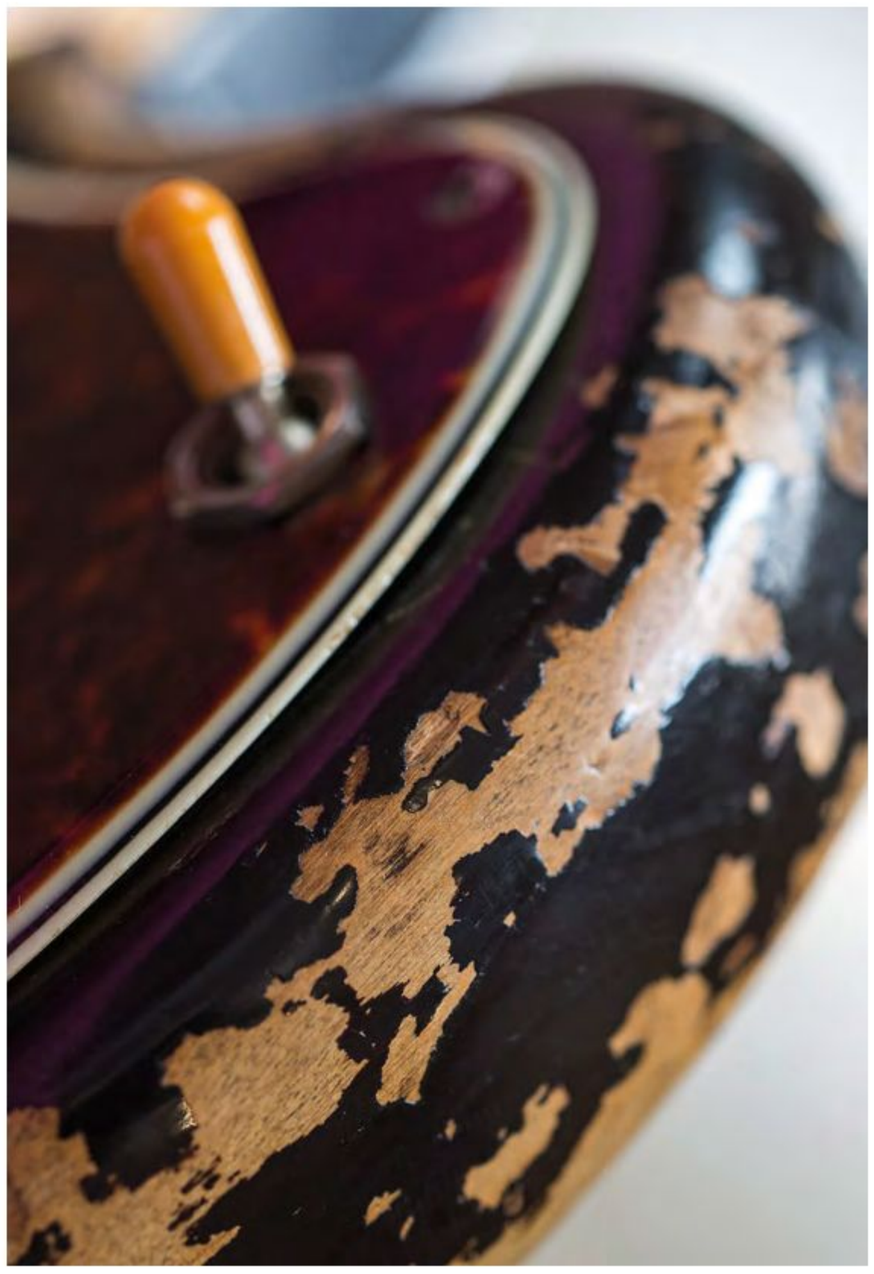
We turned right around and on the way, I called my wife to see how safely I could drain our savings to buy the guitar of a lifetime. She's my best friend and an artist as well and when she heard the excitement in my voice she affirmed the decision. "Go for it!" And for it I went. I forked over a hand full of cash, then high-tailed it back to HQ. I stayed up late that night cleaning it and going over bad solder joints, which turned out to be the problem all along.

SEVEN YEARS AFTER

Pancake is sat beside me now as I write this and we've weathered the intervening years well together,

WorldMags.net





with maybe a few more scars for our trouble. While I'd like to say we're inseparable, there was a two-year period where it belonged to my best friend Jake, the collateral in a loan to jump-start my wife's acting career in Hollywood (that's just how supportive we are!). I was finally able to buy it back from Jake in late 2015 and I haven't let it out of my sight since.

It's still mostly original, apart from a changed mid-1960s low-E tuner, a new nut cut by yours truly, an aftermarket amber switch tip, and a refret by John Woodland (aka Woody) of Mastery Bridge fame, which the guitar also wears. Recently, the original pickups started to lose some of their magic, so it now sports a pair of Seymour Duncan's fantastic and authentic Antiquity pickups that perfectly replicate the tone of the earliest Jazzmaster pickups, but with a slight bump in output.

I play this one hard. I'm grateful that the heavily checked finish was already so worn when I got it,

WorldMags.net

Gigging and playing wear and tear has resulted in a silky smooth neck feel and a heavy patina of dings and scratches

because that means I don't have to worry about it. There are fresh pick scratches from acrobatic gigging, a patch of finish worn away behind the bridge because that's just how I roll, and the 'Great Eye' of wear in the forearm position just keeps getting bigger and bigger.

EXPOSED WOOD

The wood is largely exposed on the back of the guitar thanks to the *Star Trek* belt buckle that I never take off and the back of the neck has the silky smooth feel of lacquer worn away by years of constant play. On the headstock, a combination of cigarette burns and a temporary tattoo of Luigi (of Mario Bros. fame) reminding me that it's okay to be specialised and to not be the star of the show.

And how did this Jazzmaster get the name Pancake? When I first moved to California, designer and guitar aficionado Paul Frank reached out to welcome me with a custom strap with my favourite word sewn onto it. I was blown away by his generosity, but in my shock, I couldn't come up with a favourite word.

Thinking back to a childhood filled with Saturday breakfast 'jamborees' at the local church, the word pancake came to mind. It's a word that I still can't say without feeling happy, a word heavily associated with family gatherings and playing with the other kids in the parking lot. So I sent an email to Paul with that word as my choice.

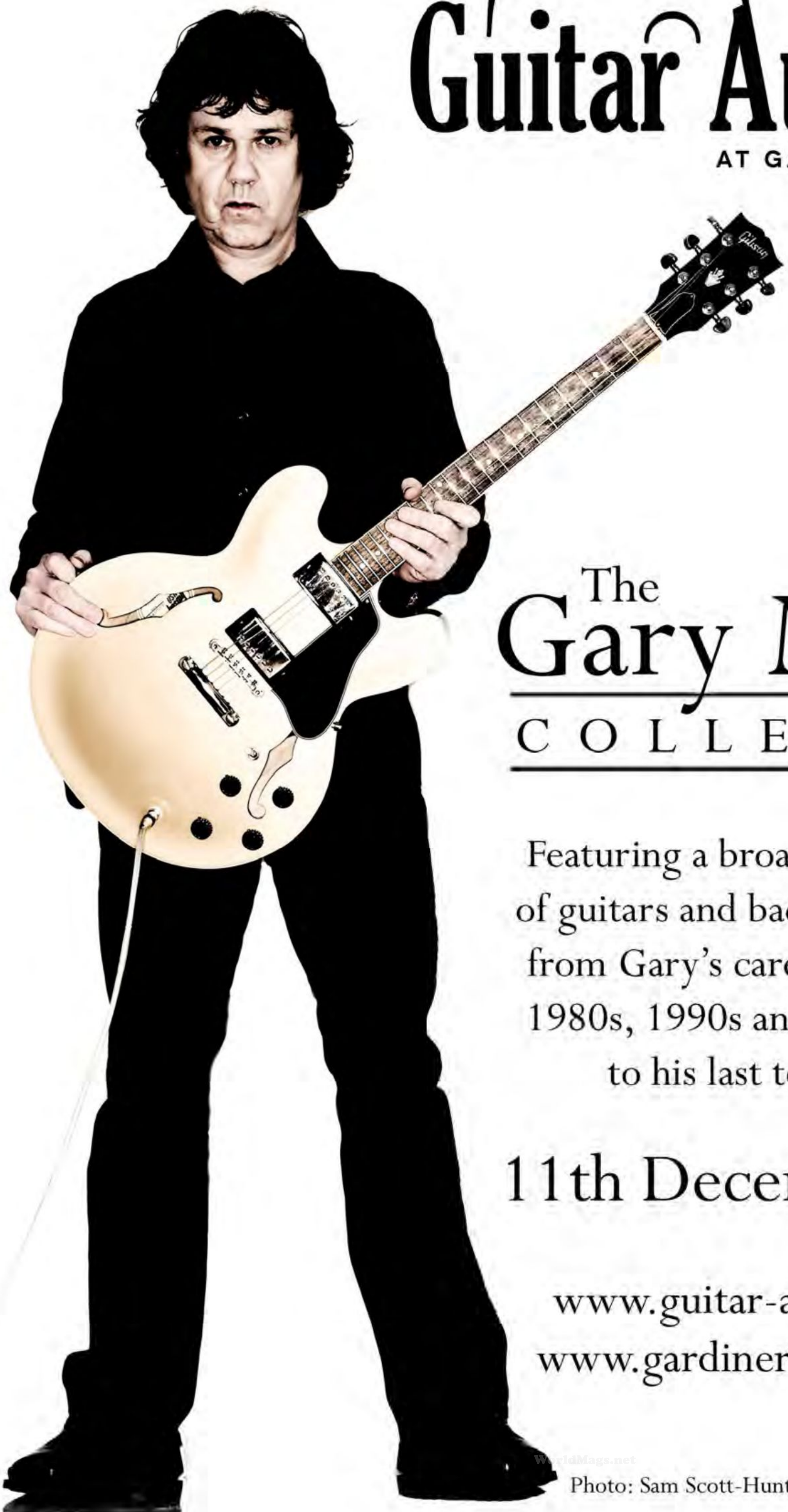
A few weeks later, the strap showed up and the name just stuck. It's been on there ever since: I really can't imagine wearing anything else on that guitar. And most of the time, I can't imagine wearing any other guitar either. **G**

Follow Michael James Adams on Instagram: @puisheen

WorldMags.net

Guitar Auctions

AT GARDINER HOULGATE



The Gary Moore COLLECTION

Featuring a broad representation of guitars and backline equipment from Gary's career, spanning the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s right up to his last tour in 2010

11th December 2019

www.guitar-auctions.co.uk

www.gardinerhoulgate.co.uk

WorldMags.net

Photo: Sam Scott-Hunter

SHOP TALK

SCOTT LENTZ JR AND SCOTT LENTZ SR

GUITAR MAKERS

WORDS DAVE HUNTER

The archetypal F-style guitar would seem a tapped-out vein by now, yet the father-and-son team at Lentz Guitar consistently inject the magic that keeps players coming back for more…

Ask boutique-minded guitarists for recommendations on a superior bolt-neck, single-coil, single- or double-cutaway electric and the fervent cry "you need a Lentz!" will come back time and again. While the uninitiated might see few significant variables in the construction of archetypal slab-bodied instruments with 25.5-inch-scale necks attached by four wood screws, aficionados of the breed understand that myriad nuances in their construction come together to produce a professional instrument, and to justify the difference between a price tag of £400 and one of £4,000.

The builders at California-based Lentz Guitar understand those nuances like few makers working today, and their mastery of them has delivered instruments that perform at the top of their capabilities, landing them in the hands of a long list of discerning pros, from Buddy Whittington to Phil X, to loads of hard-working studio and touring artists.

FINISHED PRODUCT

With some 40 years of building experience from Scott Sr, the last 20 years of which have been shared alongside his song Scott Jr, there's a wealth of skill and knowledge to be tapped here, so let's dig in and see what makes a Lentz stand out from the crowd. In addition to the acclaim for the full-build instruments, Scott Sr has long been known as one of the best finishing (and refinishing) artists in the business, and early in his career was authorised by CBS to work on Fender guitars. It's worth noting,

WorldMags.net

OPPOSITE Father and son with two of their high-quality, painstakingly crafted creations

too, that all completed Lentz guitars are still finished in-house by Scott Sr himself.

"Before I started making guitars, I had been doing finishing work on them," he tells us. "I can remember when I was around 20 years old, someone asked if I could fix an old Framus jazz guitar that had a cracked side from being dropped. I went to my grandfather's shop, put some glue in the crack and clamped it up. After everything dried, I redid the finish where the crack was. If you didn't look really close, you couldn't even tell it was broken."

Self-described as "a big woodshop guy in school", Scott Sr acquired many of the skills required for top-notch luthiery in what we might call the good old-fashioned way: by learning the craft through the working of the raw materials, before ever applying it to an instrument.

Backed by a grandfather who also understood the trade and who had a workshop loaded with all the tools necessary to get the job done, he was off to a flying start when the building bug bit.

"I built my first guitar in 1980, in Encinitas, California," he recalls. "It was a Strat-type guitar. The body of that first guitar was made from three pieces of alder that I bought at a local lumberyard. I used a bandsaw to cut the shape and routed the body and neck pocket with a template I made. I found a 70s Fender Strat neck for the guitar and screwed on a tremolo. I customised the headstock – I cut it to a shape that I liked – and painted the body blue. One of my customers still has that guitar. I sold it to him for a couple hundred bucks long ago.

"I thought that maybe I could make some money building guitars – I was already refinishing them by then – so I started making more guitars. One thing led to another, and Lentz Guitar is the result."

GOOD FORTUNE

In the early 80s, just as he was getting off the ground, Scott Sr met an experienced guitar-maker in Orange County named Dale Fortune, who had worked for Rickenbacker from the early-to-mid 70s, had known Leo Fender and had been an authorised Fender repairman for many years. "I spent a lot of time with Dale at his shop," he says, "and I learned some really valuable lessons about guitar-building from him. "I also learned a lot from a local classical-guitar builder, Jose Oribe. He talked about sound in a way that I could relate to and he introduced me to classical-guitar building techniques like using hot hide glue, and much more.

"He told me to learn as much as I possibly could about what I was doing – to take it apart like a scientist and understand every part of the guitar that I was building. Doing that would make my work easier and more enjoyable. When he said that, a light went off in my head. He was 100 per cent right. He's a remarkable guy who still builds remarkable guitars."

Even *with* Fortune on your side, however, the luthier's lot is not a lucrative one and the location forced upon the Lentz family by a tight overheads found the guitar-maker's son learning the ways of the street from an early age.

"I grew up in a very tough neighborhood in Southern California," Scott Jr tells us, "one that was rife with drug dealers and gangs. Luckily, I was afforded two vehicles for transportation out of 'the life': science fiction and luthiery.

"As I got a bit older, I realised that all the great sci-fi ideas would take many generations to come to fruition – certainly beyond my lifetime. So, I chose the more productive route, one that I could pursue in my lifetime: Lentz guitars. Being productive and creating things that will outlast me have always been, and always will be, important cornerstones in my life."

If other teenagers might have rebelled against stepping into the family business, few such endeavours are likely as cool in the first place as building world-class electric guitars. Given that, a nd a free apprenticeship at the right hand of his own father, Scott Jr says he never longed for any other way of life.

WorldMags.net

“ALL LENTZ GUITARS ARE WIRED IN-HOUSE BY ME PERSONALLY AND I STILL REALLY ENJOY THAT PARTICULAR PART OF GUITAR-MAKING. IT CATERS TO MY OCD SIDE FOR SURE” SCOTT LENTZ JR

ABOVE Scott Lentz Jr followed his father into the luthiery profession

ELECTRONIC OCD

None of which is to say it wasn’t challenging getting up to speed in an organisation with such high demands and tight tolerances. When high-end guitars are the aim, near-perfection is the name of the game – and if Scott Jr couldn’t nail it right out of the gates, well, he knew which way the door was.

“I’ve held Scott – my dad – in high regard for a long time,” says Scott Jr. “The skillset he possesses is formidable… and not just with guitars! And he set the bar high for me. You get one chance at Lentz to make good things happen. I remember early on being shown how to do a particular job – let’s say sanding a guitar body. Scott would show me how to do the job one time – I got just one try to get it right. If I couldn’t perform the task, the job would be taken away from me, never to return and that was that! I knew early on that I needed to cut my own path to make it work. And I did just that.”

Along with taking on everything needed to build a first-class guitar start to finish, Scott Jr took naturally to the internals that make an electric guitar electric. “That was the one thing that I had a natural talent for from the start. All Lentz guitars are wired in house, by me personally and I still really enjoy that particular part of guitar-making. It caters to my OCD side for sure.”

DROPPING THE F-BOMBS

Having posited at the top of this feature the notion that some guitarists might view the whole F-style homage as being fairly played-out by now, it’s interesting to probe Scott Sr. on what took him down this road in the first place.

“I’ve had a love-hate relationship with Fender Strats for years,” he reveals. “I love them when they work right and I hate them when they don’t. I think I decided to initially focus on the F-style guitars because I was confident I could build them – I knew I had the woodworking skills I needed to do it.

“Initially, I built the bodies, and I would send the neck and fingerboard wood up to Santa Barbara to a guy who would use that to build the necks, then send them back to me. After a while, I started building my own necks, too. Over the years, I’ve built all sorts of guitars that don’t fit the mould of the F-style bolt-on neck instruments, including set-neck and through-body necks.”

In the latter categories, Lentz’s Croydon model is beloved by many guitarists for its marriage of the Lentz-modified offset double-cutaway body shape with flame-maple/mahogany construction, a glued-in neck and dual humbuckers, to achieve a very Les Paul-leaning performance. Further proving there’s plenty of originality in the pudding, the DL-90 and HSL adapt the bolt-neck concept to an original body style with dual P-90s on the former, and one Tele bridge plate and pickup and one neck-position P-90 on the latter.

PRIVATE RESERVE

Right from the outset of the venture, Scott Sr made a point of seeking out and acquiring the best wood he could lay his hands on and over the years, he and Scott Jr got in the habit of saving up some of the ‘best of the best’ for particularly special projects. Eventually, the Lentz wood stores were replete with beautifully aged, decades-old tonewood just waiting to be crafted into elite musical instruments.

“We had a lot of old wood in storage that we had purchased through the years,” says Scott Jr, “some

WorldMags.net

really special boards. One day, Scott and I decided that we needed to take this great, old wood and make it into guitars. We wanted to get it out of storage and into the hands of players who would enjoy and appreciate it.

"The Lentz Reserve guitars were born. We decided from the start that these guitars would be the best of the best – exceptional instruments that amaze their owners. In these Reserve builds, we combine the best woods, craftsmanship and parts available to date. Throw in that signature Lentz tone and you have one inspirational, outstanding, lifetime guitar."

Although the Lentz Reserve guitars are split into Jr. Reserve and Sr. Reserve instruments, the sub-categories don't indicate any sort of lesser-to-greater dichotomy; instead, they merely delineate guitars made from this prized timber supply by Scott Jr or Scott Sr, respectively.

It's worth adding here, too, that while every one of the several Lentz guitars I've had the pleasure of checking out over the years has been an outstanding instrument, one Jr. Reserve S that I tested three years ago easily ranked among the finest Strat-style guitars I've ever played.

CRAFTING MAGIC

Beyond the quality of the raw materials, though, the end results that Lentz Jr and Sr achieve owe just as much to their practice of listening to the customer's needs and honing the specs and expectations until builder and client both fully understand what they're aiming at.

"We always try our best to accommodate our clients' vision in the best way possible," Scott Jr tells us. "I'm a guitarist, too, so I know what it's like to want my dream guitar. I always strive to make the best guitar possible with the client's needs in mind.

"We start by taking the time to explain our product in detail," he adds. "Going over all the options available to them. If our opinions differ, we let the client know just how we came to our opinion about a particular topic. Scott has been building guitars for almost 40 years and finishing them for even longer. We've got a lot of experience to draw from. We have found that a well-informed customer equals a happy customer."

Asked what he's learned of the ever-fickle guitar business these past 30 years, Scott Sr presents us with a slice of cold reality that confronts many small-shop builders:

"The only thing I learned early on was that you couldn't make a living making guitars without the internet – I made more money refinishing guitars. In fact, I quit building guitars for a while to focus on the refinishing business.

"Once the internet started taking off, I got back into building guitars again and was able to make money doing it. It was then that I started playing with how different combinations of wood and electronics affected the final result. When you get it right, it's magic. My son and I put a lot of effort into getting it right."

"It's been our great privilege to serve the guitar playing community for these many years," adds Scott Jr. "We'd both like to extend a big thank you to all the Lentz Guitar customers – past, present, and future." *G*

Head over to lentzguitar.com for more information on the Lentz Guitar and Lentz Reserve lines

BELOW Scott Lentz Sr built his first guitar in 1980

WorldMags.net

ASK THE AMP GUY

In the latest instalment of his amp-advice column, Rift Amps mainman Chris Fantana tackles transatlantic noise issues…

Have a burning question about your amp, or worse still, a burning amp? Email us at editors@guitar.com

Hi Chris, I've noticed that some UK/EU editions of US tube amps seem to have a higher noise level when reverb and/or vibrato is engaged. Is this due to differing safety requirements in this market jurisdiction? If so, is there an easy fix to make them run more quietly?
PHILIP BURROWS, BRIGHTON

Thank you for a great question, Philip. A quick look at the regulations for both markets show little to no differences in major safety requirements, other than RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances) legislation. The EU market currently runs to Directive 2015/863, also known as RoHS 3. This latest update came into law on 22 July 2019 and has added a further four substances to the original six.

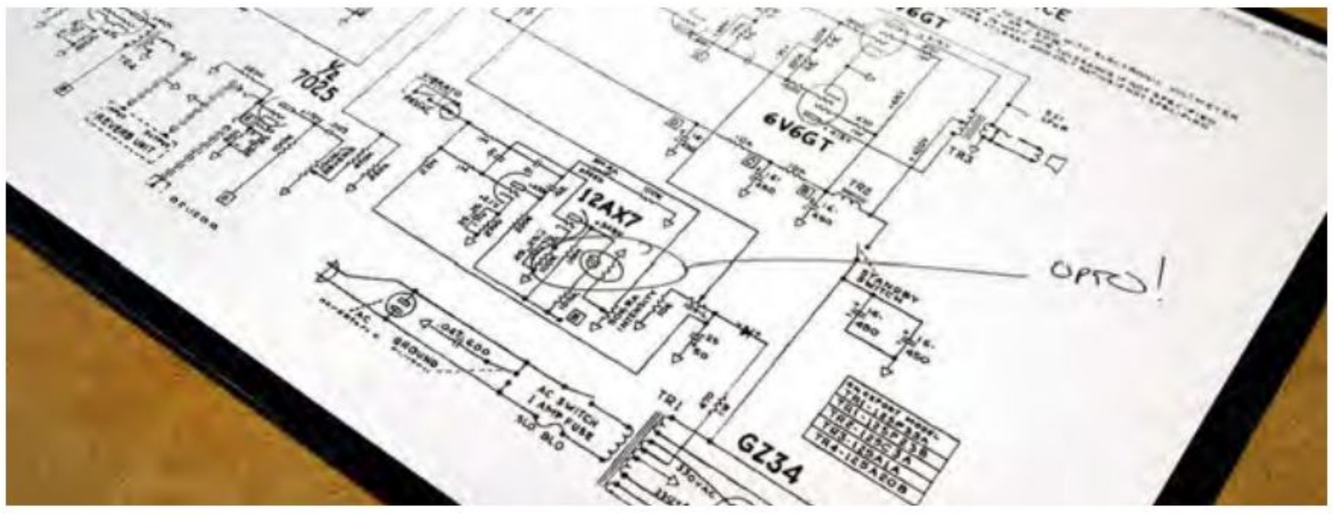
The USA generally has a more relaxed view of these substances, with most states opting for a narrower version of EU RoHS. California is probably the strictest state of them all, but still some way short of our own. Interestingly, California RoHS – and others that mirror it – only applies to 'covered electronic devices' that are defined as standalone LCD, plasma and CRT video displays with a screen greater than four inches diagonally. Probably not guitar amplifiers, then!

Why am I telling you this? Well, traditionally, two of the substances listed in RoHS have been used in the manufacture of guitar amplifiers for a very long time – lead and cadmium. Lead can be found in valves, capacitors, solder, and even transformers. Cadmium can be found in some opto-couplers, a component used in some tremolo circuits. As a manufacturer, I have to ensure that every component used in my products doesn't contain any more than the specified maximum level of these substances.

To get to your question, it's well known that some EU market models from Fender are fitted with a different tremolo circuit to that of their USA counterparts, owing to the opto-coupler used. The EU models have this component removed and instead get a bias-wiggle tremolo board added in its place. This is of course to show compliance in their respective markets, but why not just have one design that complies everywhere? Seems cheaper to me!

Personally, I find the EU-spec circuit to be better sounding, more musical and less choppy. However, some people have found it to have higher levels of hiss, which can be offputting. Thankfully, for the cost of a new opto-coupler – around £15 delivered – and an hour's labour, the EU satellite board can be removed and the circuit returned to USA spec. The main circuit board even has a little outline of the opto-coupler to show you where to put it! An end-user modding their amplifier after the fact to include a component that is not RoHS compliant is entirely legal – it's no different to fitting a set of NOS valves to your amplifier. Regarding reverb, I can't see any differences in USA versus EU spec, although a common phenomenon is cross-talk between tremolo and reverb circuits. One circuit may 'hear' the other and any noise is amplified further. You may hear a tremolo tick when the reverb control is turned up. This can be fixed by adding a small capacitor to the circuit, or an adjustment of the lead dress.

I've also found some reverb tanks have been installed the wrong way around in the bottom of the cabinet, placing the input transducer – which acts like a single-coil pickup – nearest the mains transformer where it will pick up mains hum. The reverb tank connector should always face the front of the cabinet, not the rear. As always, if you're poking around inside a valve amp please be careful, follow simple safety steps such as unplugging it from the wall first, measuring and discharging the high-voltage capacitors and taking your time. If you're unsure how to do this, your local tech will be able to help. **G**



BELOW Reverb tanks can sometimes be fitted the wrong way around, leading to hum. Fender uses a different circuit for tremolo in some of its amps in order to ensure they comply with the EU market restrictions on cadmium

WorldMags.net

Guitarist CHOICE

BE PROVOCATEUR

ARTIST: BROWNBEAR

Designed in the UK by Patrick James Eggle
Solid Mahogany Body
Roasted Mahogany Neck
Truly Vintage Scale Length
Ebony Fingerboard
USA Seymour Duncan Pickups

ShergoldGuitars.com

SHERGOLD

WorldMags.net

INDUSTRY INSIDER

MYTHOS PEDALS

INTERVIEW JOSH GARDNER

How Tennessean effects builder Zach Broyles took $1,000 and a passion for classic guitar tones and turned his hobby into one of the world's hottest boutique pedal brands…

How did you get into guitar?
"Apart from my sister taking piano lessons as a child, my only interaction with a musical instrument was playing trombone in the school concert and marching band. I'd always wanted to learn how to play guitar so for my 15th birthday, my folks bought me my first guitar, a Peavey Raptor! Guitar has always been a slight struggle for me – my left wrist was broken as a small child and never healed properly. I can only turn my fretting hand halfway over, but I love playing, so I've just tried my best to adapt and overcome."

When did you first start building or tinkering with effects?
"I bought Brian Wampler's *How To Modify Guitar Effects* book in the early 2000s and I was off to the races. I began just messing with stuff for myself, mod a pedal to see what I could get it to do, sell it on eBay and maybe make enough extra to get a little nicer pedal to mod and do it over and over again. After doing that for some time, I eventually built some pedals for myself, then friends, then some local stores – and now here we are."

What was the moment you realised that you had a viable business on your hands?
"I started messing around with Mythos in 2010, but didn't take it seriously until a few years later. After gifting Rob Chapman and Joey Landreth some pedals, I started getting reached out to more and more, so I knew I was onto something.

"My girlfriend (now wife) pushed me to really try to make this a real 'thing' and after giving it a real honest try, the pedals started selling and the feedback kept coming back positive. Around 2016, everything finally starting to click and leave the realm of a hobby."

Did you have any investors to help you establish yourself?
"When I decided to give it an honest shot, I went to the bank and opened another account just for Mythos and put $1,000 in it. I told myself if I can make this work from this $1,000, then I'll keep going – if I run out of money it wasn't meant to be. We're still here!"

How did you come up with your best-selling product?
"I think our Golden Fleece is our best-selling pedal and it came about when a friend of mine had this obscure fuzz box he wanted a back up of. I reversed the schematic and built a clone.

"That has evolved into this mini fuzz pedal that I've continually tried to improve and make the best little one-knob fuzz on the market. It's a pedal that 'lives in your guitar' and you have to play just like a cranked amp relying on your volume controls and touch. I love it and I think players do, too."

What's your proudest moment as a maker to date?
"I left all my other jobs in late 2017, but in September of 2018, my wife was able to leave her job. I finally felt like I had reached a point of being able to provide for myself, my wife, and our son.

"I've met a lot of cool people doing Mythos, seen my pedals on boards all over the world… but knowing that the work I do – creating little metal boxes that people step on – was enough to allow me to take

WorldMags.net

“KNOWING THAT THE WORK THAT I DO – CREATING LITTLE METAL BOXES THAT PEOPLE STEP ON – WAS ENOUGH TO ALLOW ME TO TAKE CARE OF THE PEOPLE THAT MATTER MOST IN MY LIFE, THAT’S REALLY SPECIAL”

care of the people that matter most in my life, that’s really special.”

When did you ‘nail’ your branding?
“I go through phases where I want to change things up and people tell me I shouldn’t. I like the look and vibe we have and want to keep working on it to make it stand out in a *very* crowded market. I think I’m the kind of person that’ll never leave well enough alone, even if people say it’s good as is.”

What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for the guitar industry today?
“Just staying in the conversation. There is so much gear – and to be fair, most things are really good. When was the last time you played something that was horrible? So staying relevant and being a brand people recognise is pretty pivotal for us. I think the biggest opportunities are via social media, connecting with more people on a personal level creates more than just another potential sale. That’s been a big focus for us and moving forward it’s only going to become more important.”

Can you give us any details of your plans for the future?
“We’re launching the Oracle Echo Machine delay very soon, which is super exciting. We’ve had great success making a DIY kit and hope to do more of those. And lastly, we have some collaborations we’re working on with really great players that should be fun. I don’t have any plans to slow down and sometimes I think I do too much… but I love this stuff, so we’re just going to keep on keeping on.” ***G***

For more information on Mythos Pedals, visit mythospedals.com

WorldMags.net

THE RUNDOWN

LOOPER PEDALS

WORDS SAM ROBERTS

Whether you're in the market for something to take your live soundscapes to the next level or you simply want to jam along at home without needing to make new friends, the humble looper is the modern guitar player's go-to stompbox…

BOSS RC-1 LOOP STATION

£92

1 Boss's entry-level RC-1 is a triumph of simplicity: the top panel features just a single level control and a multi-segment loop indicator. As a junior sibling to the RC-3, the feature set is stripped down: there's no USB for archiving or downloading audio and just 12 minutes of stereo recording time compared to the RC-3's 99 presets and massive three-hour storage capacity. 24 LED segments cycle red when recording, red/green when overdubbing and green when playing back. As soon as you've recorded a loop, the overall cycle indicates loop length. Default settings go from record to overdub and then play mode – and you can change the overdub/play order if that suits your style better.

TC ELECTRONIC DITTO LOOPER

£79

2 Sometimes the best things do come in the smallest packages. While you can buy much bigger and more complicated loopers – including TC Electronic's X2 and X4 Ditto variants (see 8) – this pocket-sized unit has found its way onto thousands of pedalboards because frankly, looping doesn't get much more intuitive than this. 24-bit uncompressed audio and unlimited overdubs mean you never have to stop playing along with yourself, while true bypass and analogue dry-through mean that it won't mess up your core tone.

DIGITECH JAM MAN EXPRESS XT

£89

3 The DigiTech JamMan Express XT is one of the most versatile and feature-packed pedals here. With true bypass, 10 minutes of stereo looping, Silent Clear and JamSync, the Express XT is a perfect looper for your pedalboard. It's incredibly easy to use with dedicated LEDs and just one knob. The Express XT uses a 9V battery (not included), or you can power it with an optional power supply. JamSync automatically synchronises with another Express XT or JamMan Solo XT, allowing you to create independent yet perfectly synchronised loops. Using JamSync enables you to build a custom multi-track looper, or build loops with your band.

CHASE BLISS BLOOPER

$499

4 The Blooper was initially revealed back at the Winter NAMM show, in conjunction with the YouTube channel Knobs. While this stompbox is niche, it does have some cool features that set it apart from others on the market. Features include 40 seconds max loop time, 32 saveable presets, eight layers of undo/redo, unlimited overdubs and six loop modifiers, available over two independent channels. There are normal, additive and one-shot sampling modes, full MIDI, a repeats knob for fading loops or to use Blooper like a tap-tempo delay and CV clock sync and modulation. Also included is a stability control, ramping and expression controls and DIP switches for deeper sonic customisation.

ELECTRO-HARMONIX 22500 STEREO LOOPER

£244

5 EHX's 22500 Stereo Looper crams a vast range of functions into a compact pedal. Inside, you get a pair of loop circuits that can be independent or locked together, parallel or sequential – enabling you to switch between verse and chorus sections. Each has a volume knob and record, play and memory lights and can be reversed or switched up or down an octave; there's an overdub facility, too, with adjustable feedback level and an undo/redo function. It's not the simplest or cheapest of boxes, but it will be incredibly useful in a variety of scenarios.

WorldMags.net

MXR CLONE LOOPER
£159

6 MXR finally made its debut in the looping world this year with the Clone Looper. This compact stomper is touted to cover a wide range of needs, including home practice, live compositions and studio usage. Its key feature is signal reproduction of higher fidelity than "any other looper of its type", according to MXR. Specs-wise, the Clone Looper features up to six minutes of recording time, unlimited dubs and a flashing four-count sequence that cues you in ahead of loops. The pedal also comes with storage sample rates of up to 88.2kHz, a factor which helps the unit handle highly processed signals, including high-gain distortion.

BOSS RC-10R
£263

7 Boss's RC-10R is a compact looper that combines song-based looping and organic-sounding rhythms. Unique to the RC-10R is a series-operated, two-track loop engine that's designed to sync to rhythm perfectly. With this feature, you'll be able to record two independent sections and create a unique rhythmic backing for each of them. The unit also boasts 280 rhythm presets which comprise two unique song sections, fills tailored for song intros/endings, as well as transitions. Tone filters are another neat feature; these let you optimise your output for amplification through guitar amps, PA systems or studio monitors. The RC-10R also offers MIDI I/O via mini-TRS jacks.

TC ELECTRONIC DITTO X4
£153

8 The new X4 is the fifth member of TC's Ditto looping dynasty. The two independent loop tracks, each providing five minutes of recording time, are assigned their own level knob plus an unlatching micro toggle that allows you to store the loop you've recorded for use elsewhere. You can also utilise either Serial mode, allowing you to switch seamlessly between the two tracks, or Sync mode, which lets you play both at the same time: this wouldn't be possible with a pair of Dittos. There are also stereo in and outs, MIDI In and Thru ports and a USB Mini B socket, plus four DIP switches. Connect to a computer via USB to either export saved loops or import audio files into the pedal via a simple interface. G

WorldMags.net

Snap Dragon Guitars
The Ultimate Travel Guitar
SMALL ENOUGH TO FIT
UNDERNEATH THE
CHRISTMAS TREE
Designed & built in the UK
For more information visit
snap-dragon-guitars.com

CODAMUSIC

www.coda-music.com

Gibson

Great selection of Gibson 2018 USA, Memphis, Custom and Montana guitars in stock.

Echopark GUITARS

With an artist roster including Joe Perry, Josh Homme & Troy Van Leeuwen - these guitars mean business! Coda Music are excited to be the first and only UK dealer to stock these stunning guitars! New delivery due soon, including Model J, 59 and La Carne.

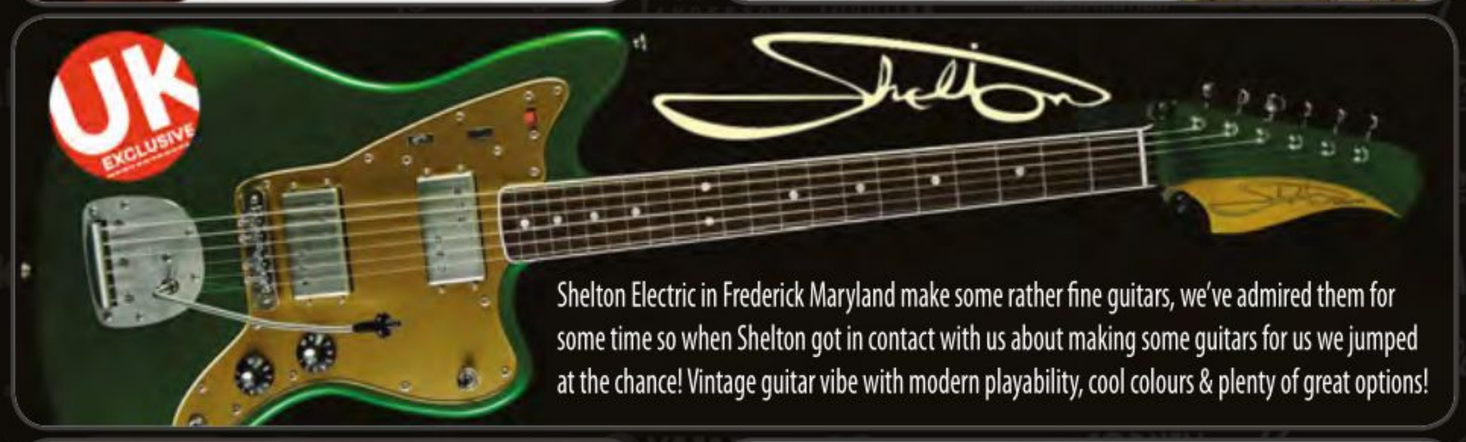
dunable custom guitars

Los Angeles

Sasha Dunable makes some scarily good guitars in Glendale California. We had one through as a trade in a while back and were so impressed that we contacted Sasha and got him to build some for us.

Fender

Leading supplier of all things Fender and Squier, whether you're after a Strat or Tele, Jaguar or Jazzmaster, Precision or Jazz, you're sure to find it at Coda Music.



Shelton Electric

Shelton Electric in Frederick Maryland make some rather fine guitars, we've admired them for some time so when Shelton got in contact with us about making some guitars for us we jumped at the chance! Vintage guitar vibe with modern playability, cool colours & plenty of great options!

Swart AMPLIFIER COMPANY

Here at Coda we love Swart Amps. Full range in stock from the little 6V6SE to the Atomic Space Tone, right up to the new Antares.

Full range of Two Rock Heads, Combos and Cabinets in stock

Two-Rock

FUCHS AUDIO TECHNOLOGY

Their growing product line includes Fuchs amp models from 4 to 100 watts.

Fuchs Audio Technology has established itself as a highly respected new voice in handcrafted amplification and custom effects.

fano guitars

The only place in the UK to see Fano guitars. New Fano Standard models now arriving. You could say the Fano Standard series is Fano's "greatest hits" collection. After studying their order history of custom Alt de Facto guitar line they combined the most popular requests of features & options into a new line of ready-to-play guitars.

We are delighted to be stocking Morgan amps and effects. First delivery now in.

MORGAN AMPLIFICATION

Bartel AMPLIFIERS

New line of amps from Mark Bartel, the amplification genius behind Tone King. Hand built by Mark in Baltimore with fantastic attention to detail & no expense spared...

100's of secondhand guitars, amps & pedals in stock, see www.coda-music.com for an up to date list.

We buy secondhand guitars - bring yours in for a quote & try something new at the same time

Novo GUITARS BY • DENNIS • FANO

Coda Music are proud & delighted to be dealers of these fine instruments. Visit us instore to try one today.

Famous for the stunning and, quite frankly, game-changing Alt De Facto line of guitars, Dennis has become one of the most respected master luthiers and guitar designers of modern times. Dennis has been working on a new vision for the modern electric guitar...ladies and gentlemen i give you...Novo Guitars!!!

Fender CUSTOM SHOP

WHEN YOU'RE READY A Custom Shop guitar embodies everything Fender has learned over 60 years of building the world's most revered electric solidbodies. The finest materials, all the right details, hand built in Corona, California – it's the guitar of your dreams, realised.

WE HAVE THE GUITAR FOR YOU Coda Music is Europe's biggest and best Fender Custom Shop dealer, so whether you want a perfect New Old Stock, vintage-correct model, or the heaviest of Heavy Relics with a raft of custom playability tweaks, you'll find it here and with over 100 in stock in one store you won't find a better selection anywhere.

UNIQUE TO US, UNIQUE TO YOU Our extensive in-store stock includes many custom ordered guitars, built to our own exacting specs after years of buying, selling and playing these fabulous instruments.

CAN WE BUILD IT? Yes we can! If you have that extra special something in mind, we can work with you to make it a reality. Custom orders can be ready in a matter of months and cost less than you might think – call us, email us or drop in to discuss your perfect combination of features.

CARR AMPLIFIERS

Great selection of models and finishes, Europe's number one Carr amp dealer. Carr Mercury V now in stock.

Asher GUITARS & LAP STEELS

LOS ANGELES • CALIFORNIA

Asher Guitars & Lap Steels is dedicated to handcrafting stellar quality instruments that can be appreciated by musicians of all types.

Effects

Coda Music bring you the finest guitar effects pedals money can buy!...ready for you to demo with a your choice of amplifier and guitar!!!

Our pedal range includes the usual suspects such as Boss, Electro Harmonix, Ibanez, Jim Dunlop, Joyo, Line 6, Mesa Boogie, Mooer, MXR, Strymon, T-Rex, TC Electronic, Visual Sound, Voodoo Lab, Wampler, Way Huge, Xotic.....we also have a huge selection of the less ordinary suspects like Bad Cat, Death By Audio, Earthquaker Devices, EWS, Faifield Electronic, Free The Tone, Fulltone Custom Shop, Jetter Gear, Keeley, Mad Professor, Providence, Rothwell and Sonic Edge!!!

51a High Street, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 3AH t : 01438 350 815 e : stevenage@coda-music.co.uk

Acoustic Centre 27b Church Lane, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 3QW t: 01438 350815 e: acoustics@coda-music.com

WorldMags.net

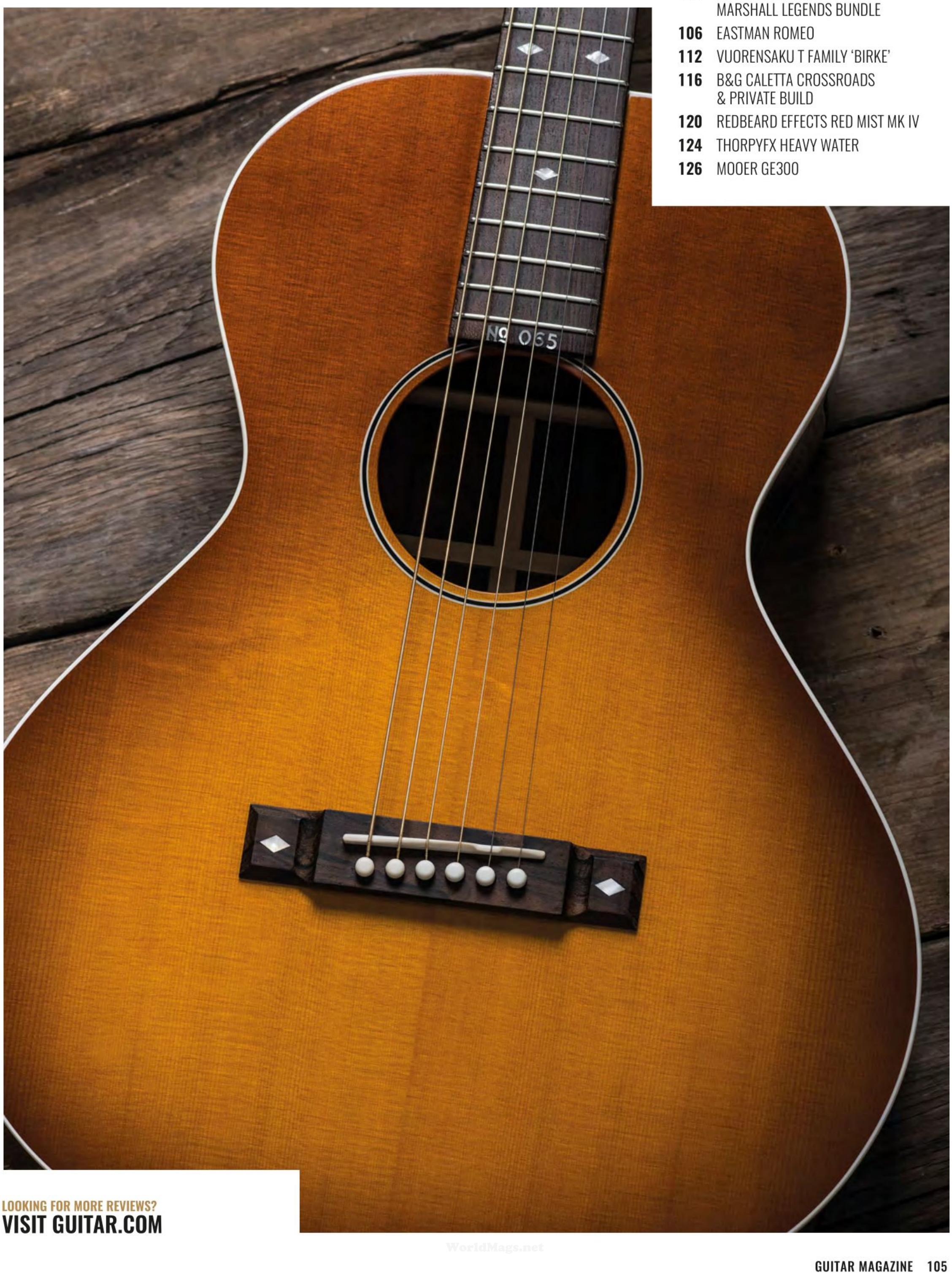
Instant decision 9 months 0% finance

available on all new products over £300 on our website

REVIEWS

CONTENTS

022 MILLIMETRIC INSTRUMENTS MGS2
040 GIBSON LES PAUL MODERN
044 RELISH MARY ONE
056 BLACKSTAR SILVERLINE STANDARD & STEREO DELUXE
060 UNIVERSAL AUDIO MARSHALL LEGENDS BUNDLE
106 EASTMAN ROMEO
112 VUORENSAKU T FAMILY 'BIRKE'
116 B&G CALETTA CROSSROADS & PRIVATE BUILD
120 REDBEARD EFFECTS RED MIST MK IV
124 THORPYFX HEAVY WATER
126 MOOER GE300



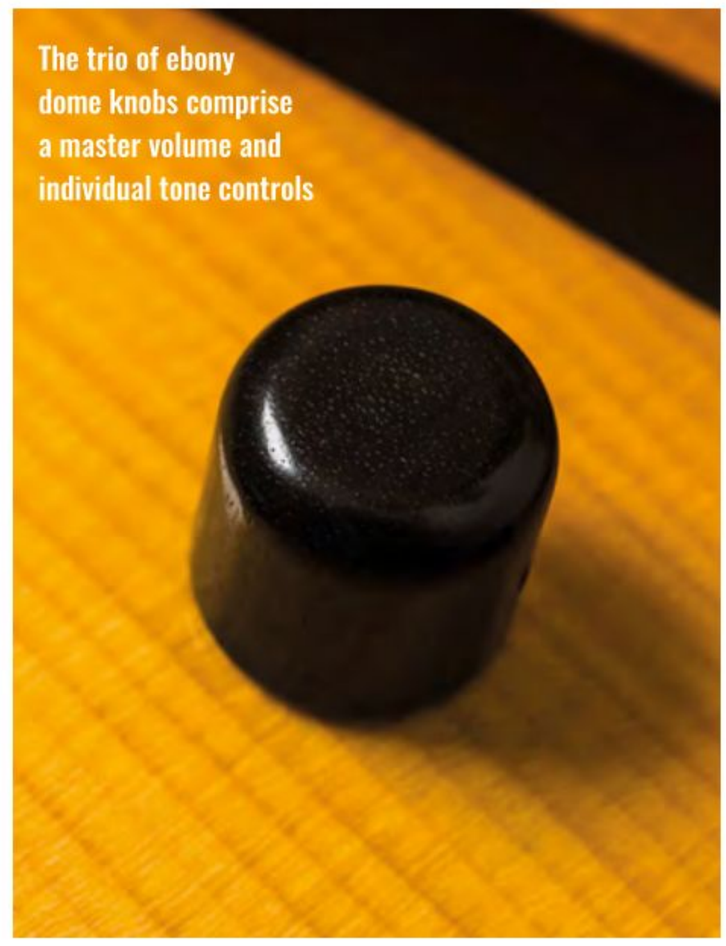
LOOKING FOR MORE REVIEWS?
VISIT GUITAR.COM

WorldMags.net

WorldMags.net

The slim headstock design allows for a clean string path behind the nut

The laminate mahogany back and maple neck are hewn from attractive sections of timber



The trio of ebony dome knobs comprise a master volume and individual tone controls

EASTMAN ROMEO

WORDS CHRIS VINNICOMBE

Guitar.com EDITOR'S CHOICE

The pursuit of your next guitar needn't be a tale of star-crossed love. Meet Romeo, Eastman's new thinline hollowbody design that promises more twang and spank than your average humbucker-loaded archtop…

These are heady days for the Eastman Music Company. At the time of going to press, the brand had recently announced a strategic partnership with Bourgeois Guitars, while Eastman's own recent output has served up more than a few slices of humble pie to those who still don't believe a great vintage-style guitar can be built outside of North America. In addition, 2019 saw the launch of Romeo, an original design from master luthier Otto D'Ambrosio that sought to answer the question: "What would the Telecaster of the archtop-guitar world look and sound like?"

The R&D process that gave birth to Romeo took about two years to go from drawings to the initial production run. From the outset, Otto established the following criteria: the guitar had to be light and resonant, yet perfectly balanced, while the cutaway was to be as deep as possible for upper-fret access and the lower bout had to be 14-15 inches across.

"The first sample was maple back and sides, which made for a very poppy and bright tone," Otto recalls. "We decided on mahogany laminate. All of a sudden, we heard the more throaty, twangy midrange. The Lollar Imperial humbuckers are perfectly suited to colour some of the electric signal with this semi-hollow resonance. Our Lollar humbuckers are partially wax potted, so they are slightly microphonic. They are also lower wound. What that does to this guitar is magical."

Lightweight maple was chosen for the neck thanks to its stability and the way in which it transfers vibrations, but it has the benefit of being pretty, too – our review example has an attractive figure with an almost holographic flame.

Other than a mahogany block under the bridge and tailpiece that couples the arched top and back, the Romeo is fully hollow. Although this inevitably means the headstock begins to journey south when you are strapped on and hands free, when playing, Romeo is balanced effortlessly by your forearm resting on its lower bout. In our experience, neck dive is only invasive when your fretting hand has to compensate

WorldMags.net

Dunlop | PERFORMANCE IS EVERYTHING.™

GET LOOPED.

jimdunlop.com

WorldMags.net

Custom-wound, partially potted Lollar Imperial humbuckers bring the tones

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £1,950 (inc. hard case)
DESCRIPTION Thinline single-cutaway hollowbody 6-string electric guitar. Made in China
BUILD Solid spruce top, mahogany laminate back and sides, ivoroid top and back binding, set maple neck with 'Traditional Even C' profile, 12"-radius ebony fingerboard, 22x Jescar 47104 frets, single-action truss-rod, bone nut
HARDWARE Nickel-plated Gotoh aluminium stop tailpiece and tune-o-matic bridge with hard zinc saddles. Gotoh 1:18 ratio HAP sealed tuners
ELECTRICS 2x custom-wound Lollar Imperial humbuckers, master volume, 2x tone, 3-way toggle pickup selector
SCALE LENGTH 24.75"/629mm
NECK WIDTH 43.8mm at nut, 54.5mm at 12th fret
NECK DEPTH 22.1mm at first fret, 23.0mm at 12th fret
STRING SPACING 36.8mm at nut, 51.6mm at bridge
WEIGHT 2.49kg/5.5lb
LEFT-HANDERS No
FINISH Goldburst gloss nitrocellulose
CONTACT Eastman Music Company
eastmanguitars.com

Semicircular pearl side-dots add a touch of class to the maple neck

for it – that's definitely not the case here. Indeed, whether standing or seated, this is an extremely comfortable guitar to play.

"We looked into making the body shorter – this pulled the neck lower in the body, resulting in a better hand and wrist playing posture," reveals Otto. "For a smaller semi, we think [a body width of] 14.75 inches is about perfect. Small and nimble, but not too small like a 13-inch solidbody."

From the semicircular pearl side-dots to the ebony dome knobs and the straight-grain spruce top with its gorgeous Goldburst finish, the Romeo is an exercise in understated elegance. We've noted in the past that what Eastman's hand-built electrics lack in manufacturing precision they more than make up for in sheer vibe, but there's no shortfall here. Our review guitar is largely pin-sharp and stands up to close scrutiny, with only very slight hints of untidiness around the neck join, but we're splitting hairs – this is a very handsome machine indeed.

IN USE

With a new headstock design that allows for a clean and relatively straight string path behind the nut, plus a set of smooth-action 1:18 ratio tuners, the potential for tuning stability issues has been minimised. This guitar feels like it could handle a gig straight out of the shipping box and its performance is every bit as enthralling as we remember from our first encounter with the Romeo design at Summer NAMM back in July.

Eastman's Traditional Even C neck profile is precisely as advertised and the gloss nitrocellulose finish is devoid of drag or stickiness, which helps promote a fast and fluid feel. As you might expect from a hollowbody, there's plenty of acoustic volume, harmonic interest and impressive sustain at the cowboy end.

Above the 12th fret, the acoustic tone is smooth and sweet and although high-register single notes don't approach solidbody levels of sustain as they would on a centre-block-equipped semi, Romeo certainly offers more decay to play with than a typical ES-330.

The amplified tale of Romeo is one of three distinct acts. At the bridge, you get

WorldMags.net

The headstock sports Gotoh 1:18 ratio HAP (Height Adjustable Post) sealed tuners

The body's solid spruce top and mahogany laminate back and sides are complemented by ivoroid binding

a versatile blend of ES-335 and Telecaster with a raunchy twang; it loves alt-country as much as it does windmilling classic rock and it rewards digging in.

The hollower middle position on a twin-humbucker archtop has long been a favourite for Leo Nocentelli-style funk, but the Romeo seems to tip the scales a little further towards Fender with a light, spanky flavour. Here, it encourages the kind of soulful Curtis Mayfield and Jimi-style rhythm embellishments usually reserved for Stratocasters, especially with the guitar's volume knocked back a couple of notches.

It's in the neck position that this spruce-topped hollowbody is perhaps at its most predictable, as there are sophisticated blues and smooth fusion tones aplenty. We agree with Otto when it comes to the partially potted Lollars – these custom-voiced Imperials are a great match for this guitar. Clarity, air, dynamics; everything you want from a great vintage-style humbucker is present and correct and working in tandem with the Romeo's natural timbre.

With just one master volume and a pair of tone controls, you don't get as much room to manoeuvre as you would from a wiring harness that includes individual pickup volumes. That said, the Orange Drop-equipped tone pots offer plenty of high-end roll-off and a sweep that works well with overdrive for Cream-era Clapton and thicker Texas blues tones.

What would an 'archtop Telecaster' look like? Something like this, perhaps

Creating a new body shape that feels simultaneously fresh and familiar is one of the most challenging tricks in all Guitardom, but we think Otto and his colleagues at Eastman have pulled it off. Sure, there's some Gibson in there, a slice of Telecaster, some Rickenbacker and perhaps a pinch of Gene Baker – after all, nothing is designed in a vacuum – but Romeo is a body shape that Eastman can proudly call its own. It's also a design that the company sees as a platform for a whole range of instruments in the future, and on the evidence of this guitar, that's certainly no tragedy. **G**

9/10 **Versatile and soulful, there's much to love about this classy new electric**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Ibanez AGS73FM **£489**, Gibson ES-235 Gloss **£1,399**, Collings SoCo LC **£5,790**

WorldMags.net

INFINITE CREATIVITY

STUNNING AUDIO

30 MIN LOOPER · SYNTH · TONE CAPTURE · 108 PREAMPS · 164 EFFECTS · IR LOADER · MIDI · AUDIO · 3DSP

MOOER

EFFECTS AND AMPLIFICATION

mooeraudio.com

WorldMags.net

VUORENSAKU
T FAMILY ‘BIRKE’

WORDS RICHARD PURVIS

Guitar.com EDITOR’S CHOICE

Fresh from the lakeland region of central Finland, this pine-bodied boutique stunner blends Fender and Gibson design influences with a dash of rustic Scandi cool

A mere 13 years after accidentally winning the Eurovision Song Contest with a goth-metal band, does Finland now have a high-class guitar builder to take on the world? A few days into our time with this beautifully crafted Vuorensaku, we think it might.

Saku Vuori’s designs are inspired by old Finnish houses and furniture and often make use of one of the country’s biggest natural resources: pine trees. Billy Gibbons is a Vuorensaku fan and these premium-priced instruments are now available in the UK via Coda Music.

This, then, is the T Family ‘Birke’ model. Vuori is a lover of Fender offsets and there’s certainly an element of Jazzmaster in the body shape, not to mention the Mastery bridge and vibrato tailpiece; but that’s combined with a Tele-style control plate and, most distinctively, an elegant German carve around the front edge of the body.

Defined by off-white binding, the dark green ‘top’ looks like a separate piece of timber but it’s clear from the grain that the Birke’s body is simply two slabs of pine joined down the middle.

And then we come to the pickups. This luthier winds his own and here, we get a humbucker in the bridge position, mounted to a metal plate that extends around the bridge posts and a P-90 at the neck. Single-figure DC readings hint that they’re wound vintage-style, rather than hot.

If you think things are heading in the direction of Kalamazoo, the neck goes further: it’s a comfortably rounded chunk

WorldMags.net

The hardware and controls have been tarnished and the top dinged for an aged vibe

Below: The Birke's elegant German-carved pine body and off-white binding

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £3,899 (inc. hard case)
DESCRIPTION Solidbody offset-waist guitar. Made in Finland
BUILD Pine body, maple neck, 9.5-10" compound radius pau ferro fingerboard with 21 medium frets
HARDWARE Gotoh vintage-style tuners, Mastery bridge and tailpiece
ELECTRICS Vuorensaku Custom bridge humbucker and neck P-90, three-way switch, master volume and tone controls
SCALE LENGTH 25.5"/648mm
NECK WIDTH 42.6mm at nut, 51.6mm at 12th fret
NECK DEPTH 23.8mm at first fret, 25.4mm at 12th fret
STRING SPACING 37mm at nut, 52mm at bridge
WEIGHT 4kg/8.8lb
FINISH Army Green (custom colours available)
LEFT-HANDERS Available on custom order
CONTACT Coda Music coda-music.com
vuorensaku.fi

with a profile described as '59 LP'. But it's maple, with a Fender-style 25.5-inch scale length. Clearly, Vuori is a boutique builder happy to cherry-pick features from across the spectrum of classic designs – and who can blame him for that?

The fretboard is pau ferro, a common rosewood alternative, and has been sanded to a compound radius – though the gradation is so slight, from 9.5 to 10 inches, you might not even feel it. At the far end, you'll find a neatly cut bone nut, and here's another splash of local colour: it's not just any old bone salvaged from a butcher's bin, but Finnish elk.

The hardware is a combination of aluminium, nickel and stainless steel and it's all been tarnished to go with the body's tasteful relic job. The different metals aren't very well matched in shade and texture, but nobody's going to notice when you're windmilling away under stage lights. The whole thing feels super-solid – we don't know much about those old Finnish houses, but if this guitar were a building, we'd trust it to keep out the cold north winds.

Another notable feature is the headstock, which has a sort of straightened-out Tele shape and a metal plate screwed to the front. This is one of four places where you'll find the guitar's serial number – it's also on the back of the headstock, the bridge pickup surround and the neck plate. You'll soon know it off by heart.

IN USE

Pine as a tonewood? It's not so unusual: Dennis Fano has used it for his Novo guitars and some say pine only fell out of favour with Leo Fender during the development of the Esquire because it dented too easily. That's not really an issue for the Birke, whose edges are well and truly 'worn in' already. In combination with a relatively thick maple neck, this Finnish pine makes for a fairly heavy offset that balances naturally on the strap.

WorldMags.net

The headstock is a variation on the classic T-style design and features a metal plate adorned with its serial number

The Birke has a Mastery bridge and tailpiece and a Vuorensaku Custom bridge humbucker

The 21-fret pau ferro fingerboard features a compound radius

If all pine sounds as good as this, maybe we should stop worrying about a few dents. The guitar's acoustic tone is fresh and resonant, with lots of warm sustain and a forthright midrange. It makes us want to hear it amplified as soon as possible.

A clean amp makes it clear from the off that both pickups have the hi-fi chops to preserve the guitar's innate fullness of tone. The sound in all positions is big and smooth – maybe these pups aren't as underwound as the resistance figures suggest – but there's still room for some perky character to shine through.

Not that much perky character, though. You do get some of that special Jazzmaster sweetness in the midrange but, perhaps because of the efficient solidity of that non-rocking bridge, there's none of the percussive plunk of a traditional offset. Whether you think that's good news or bad is, as ever, a matter of personal taste.

The neck pickup does the jazzy thing with style, though it has little of the 'snap' you might be expecting based on P-90s in Gibson solidbodies. Likewise, the 'bucker at the bridge doesn't sound much like a PAF, at least not in this setting: slam on the overdrive and it'll gladly get stuck in, but the Fender elements of the guitar's design give it a more breezy, less mids-focused tone than you'll get from a Les Paul or SG.

Playing lead lines through a cooking tweed amp, there's a glorious precision to the note attack on all three pickup settings. The P-90 serves up a nicely compressed thump all the way up the neck and the humbucker remains equally disciplined, never getting thin or spiky. Open chords sound rich yet neatly contained, but you might not play many of them – because that rounded neck with its easy satin finish makes for an irresistible soloing machine.

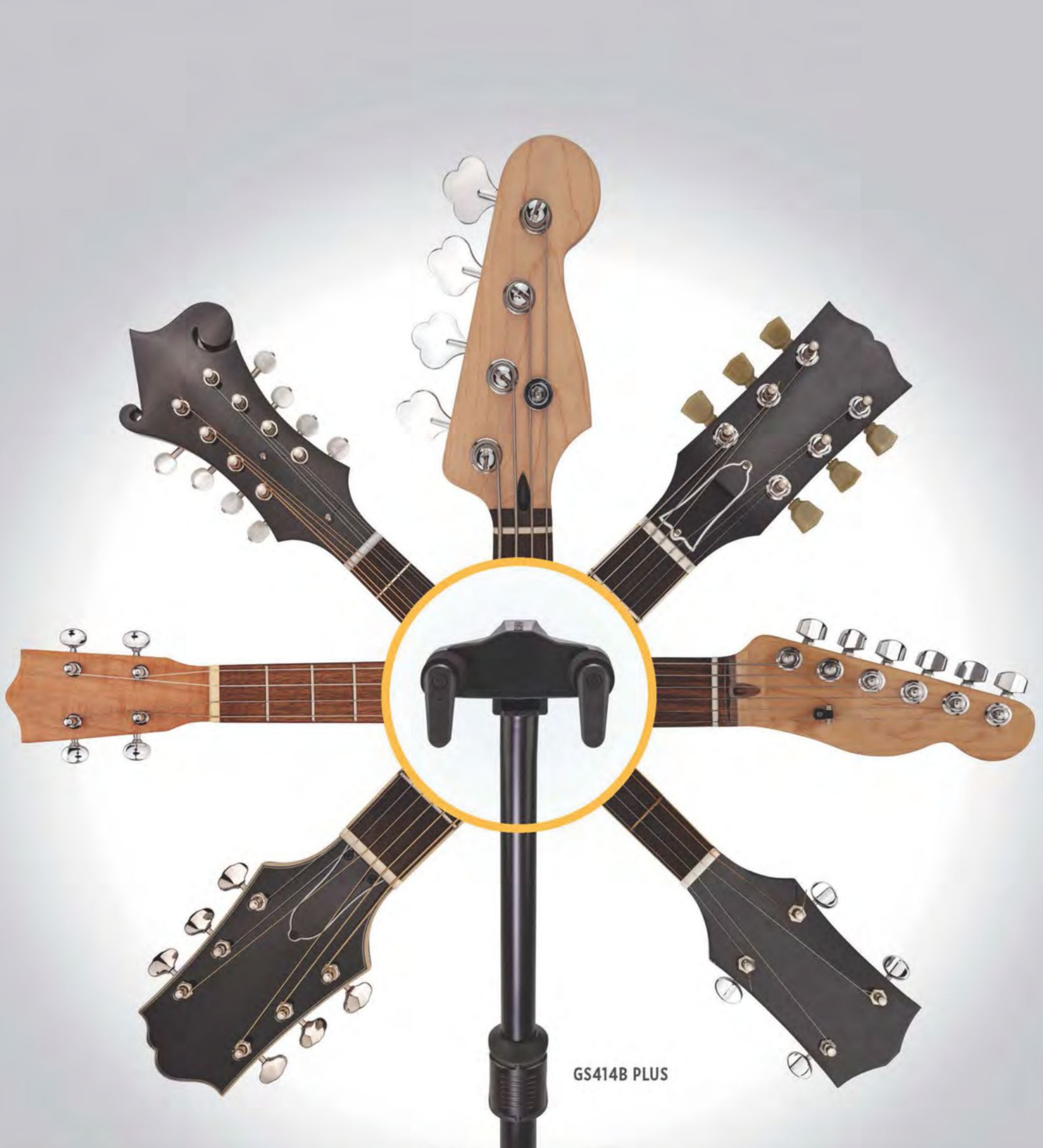
What we have here, then, is a complex brew of Fender and Gibson influences that carries through some of the best characteristics of both, resulting in a bold and beefy tone that's all its own. If you're passionate about the magic of the great solidbody archetypes, be warned that the Birke is not going to give you those classic sounds in their purest form. However, if you're looking for the ultimate all-rounder to top off your collection, this could be a strong – and distinctive – contender. *G*

9/10 **A 'best of all worlds' guitar that simply oozes refinement**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Shelton GalaxyFlite Blaster **£2,999**, Bunting Melody Queen **£2,750**, Novo Serus J **£3,299**

WorldMags.net



HERCULES®

The AGS **PLUS** Series...
EXPONENTIALLY BETTER

+ MORE ADAPTABLE + ENHANCED STABILITY + SMOOTHER ADJUSTMENT

IT ALL ADDS UP TO TRUST.

HERCULESSTANDS.COM

WorldMags.net

B&G

CALETTA CROSSROADS & PRIVATE BUILD

WORDS HUW PRICE

The Tel Aviv company has moved into acoustic-guitar production with a distinctly vintage vibe. And just like the Little Sister electric, you can custom-order a Private Build or buy a factory-made Crossroads straight off the rack…

When a 1904 Oscar Schmidt Stella landed on the workbench of one of B&G's co-founders and head luthiers, Kiki Goldstein, he came to love the guitar so much he bought it. Over time, he decided to try and create his dream acoustic guitar by combining the comfort and the vibe of the Stella with a bigger and richer tone.

Kiki had to determine the best shape and depth, find the right bracing pattern, work out the optimal top thickness and scale length – and more besides. The process took almost two years and the result is the B&G Caletta – named after Robert Johnson's wife, Caletta Craft – with a body size between a 00 and 000.

B&G describes the Caletta as being "made according to traditional American lutherie", however, some innovations have been made to enhance durability. Principally, these include reinforcing the upper bout with dual upper transverse braces to guard against top deformation and a Spanish cedar neck block with an extended 'tongue' that protrudes along the back.

The latter is intended to lock the neck angle in, with the help of a deep tenon, to create a gluing surface four times greater than that of a traditional dovetail joint. All Private Build tops have been air-dried for over 20 years and they're tuned individually. Hide glue is used throughout and the final voicing is done after the guitar is assembled and strung. A variety of finish options are available in gloss and open-pore nitrocellulose.

Just like B&G's Private Build electrics, the Caletta is available in a more affordable guise as the Caletta Crossroads. B&G contracted a small workshop in Korea and provided the craftsmen there with specialist training and all the necessary jigs and tools.

The proprietary neck joint and hot hide glue construction are the same, and at first glance, there's little to distinguish the Crossroads from the Private Build. However, the finish is ultra-thin gloss urethane rather than nitro, and although customers

WorldMags.net

This page: Details from the Caletta Crossroads

Facing page: The high-end Caletta Private Build

KEY FEATURES

CALETTA CROSSROADS

PRICE £1,920 (inc. hard case)

DESCRIPTION All solid wood 6-string acoustic guitar. Made in Korea

BUILD Sitka spruce top with Sitka spruce braces, solid ovangkol sides and back, African mahogany linings and head and tail blocks. Set African mahogany neck with 14"-radius ebony fingerboard, pearloid diamond markers, ebony peghead overlay. 12th-fret neck join, 3-on-a-plate Delta tuners, ebony bridge, Tusq bridge pins, Tusq nut and compensated saddle, ABS body binding

SCALE LENGTH 629mm/24.75"

NECK WIDTH 44.2mm at nut, 55.1mm at 12th fret

NECK DEPTH 22.36mm at first fret, 24.2mm at 9th fret

STRING SPACING 36mm at nut, 57mm at bridge

WEIGHT 1.76kg/3.88lb

LEFT HANDERS Yes

FINISH Honey Burst (as reviewed), Natural, Vintage Amber and Tobacco Burst urethane

9/10 **Fabulous build and playability, great looks and gorgeous tone make the Crossroads hard to fault**

can choose from a variety of options, they cannot custom-spec the guitars.

Crossroads timber options include all-mahogany, and Sitka spruce with mahogany or ovangkol back and sides. Private Build options are all-mahogany, and Sitka spruce with mahogany, pau ferro, koa or ziricote back and sides. Here, we have the ovangkol and ziricote models with spruce tops.

IN USE

Given the differences in timber, and the fact that the Private Build comes strung with bronze rather than phosphor bronze strings, we're not exactly comparing like with like. Even so, there's no doubting the pedigree is the same.

Starting with the Crossroads, the first thing that strikes us is the neck profile. It's a sublimely soft V that fits perfectly in the hand and feels entirely appropriate for this style of guitar.

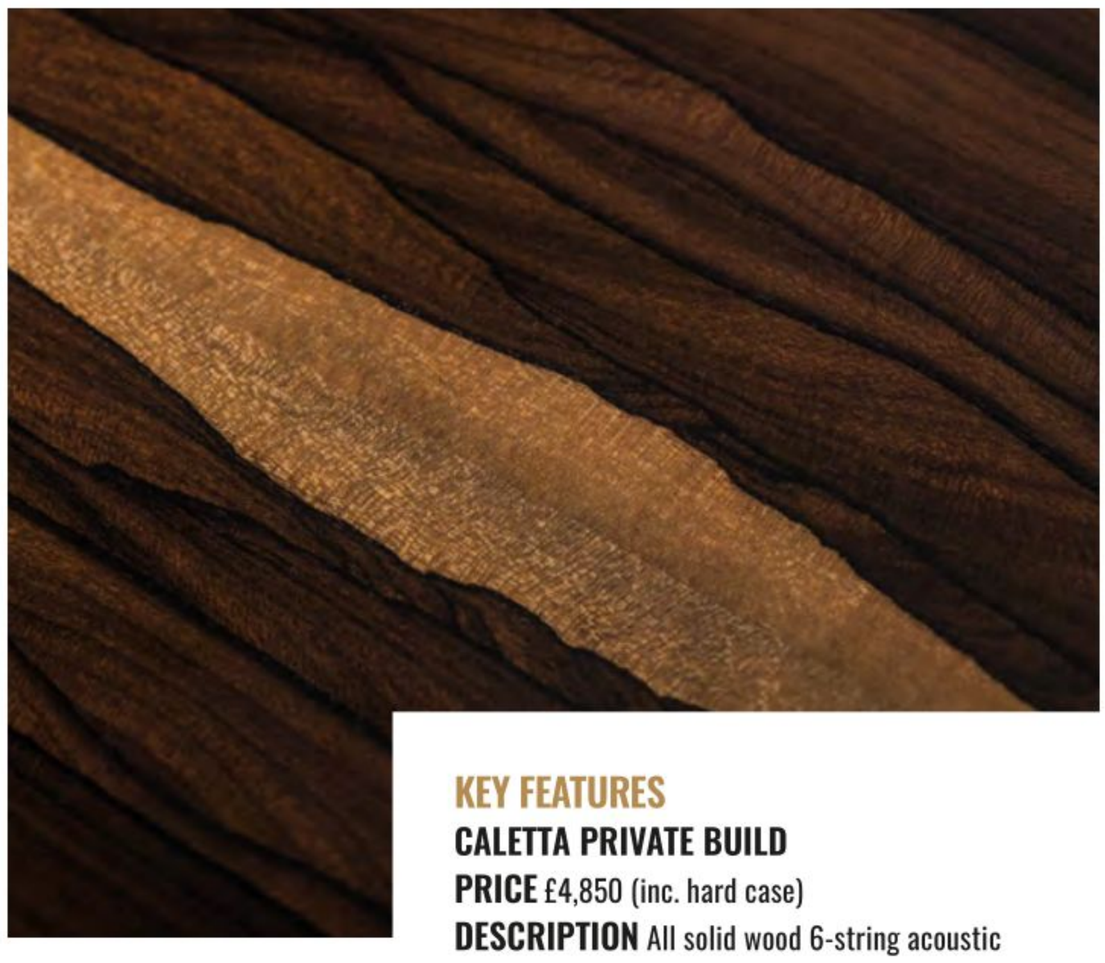
The Private Build's neck is very similar, but the V is a little less pronounced and it feels more like the profile we have come to admire on B&G's electric models. But dare we say it, we prefer the shape, depth and extra width of the Crossroads neck. These guitars are clearly intended for fingerstyle players and for us, the extra width in particular makes the Crossroads a tiny bit easier to play – but without the dauntingly wide string spread that is so often part of the deal with slot-headed acoustics.

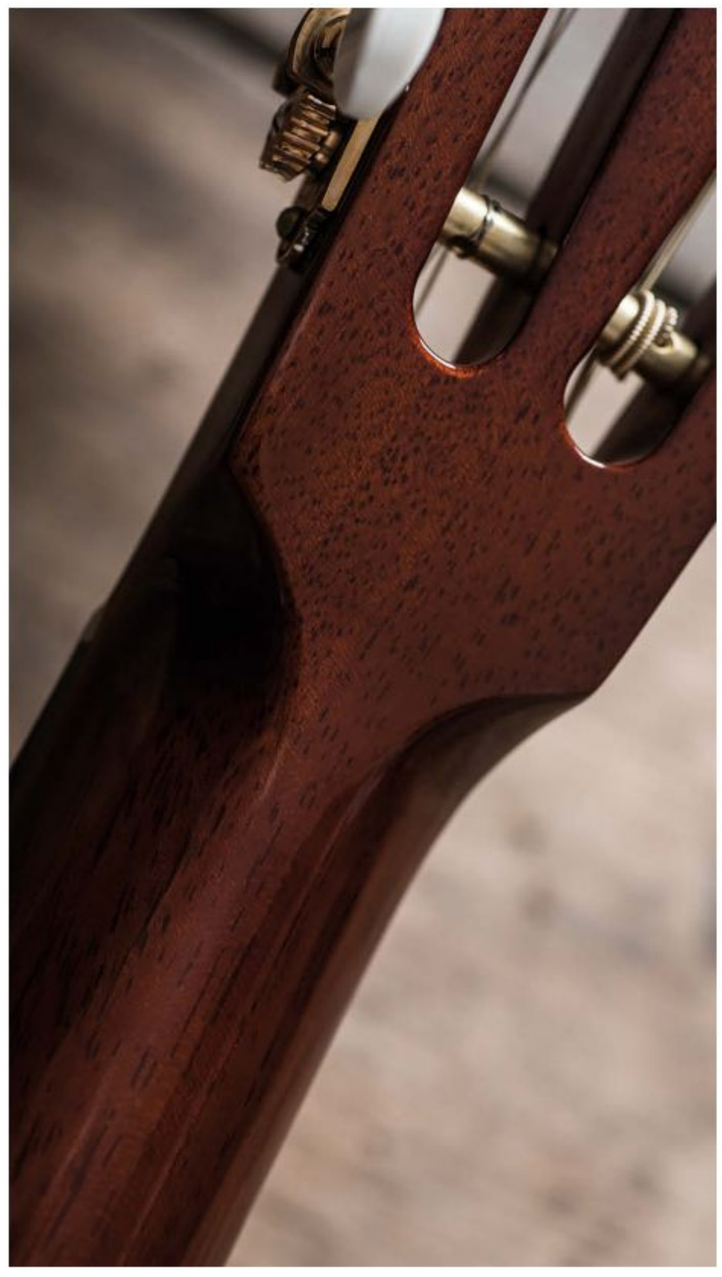
Considering the body size, the Crossroads generates far more volume and bass that we would have anticipated. There's nothing boomy or overblown about it and the response is nicely extended in the treble, but the overall frequency balance is very even and balanced.

Having said that, the response is extremely quick and there's a willing liveliness that gives the Crossroads a vibrancy and power that isn't always present in similarly constructed vintage acoustics. The looks may be retro, but the tone isn't. Yes, it lends itself perfectly to blues and country picking, but the sweet upper-harmonic sheen is not something we tend to associate with the dryer and woodier tones of vintage parlors.

The longer we play, the better the Crossroads sounds. Soon, we're into open tunings and the bottleneck gets an outing – the playability and setup are remarkable,

WorldMags.net





KEY FEATURES

CALETTA PRIVATE BUILD

PRICE £4,850 (inc. hard case)

DESCRIPTION All solid wood 6-string acoustic guitar. Made in Israel

BUILD 20-year aged Sitka spruce top with alpine spruce braces, solid ziricote sides and back, Spanish cedar linings and head and tail blocks. Set genuine mahogany neck and 12"-radius ziricote fingerboard, pearloid diamond markers, ziricote peghead overlay. 12th-fret neck join, 3-on-a-plate Waverly tuners, ziricote bridge, Tusq bridge pins, Tusq nut and compensated saddle, ABS body binding

SCALE LENGTH 629mm/24.75"

NECK WIDTH 42.5mm at nut, 53.75mm at 12th fret (46.0mm nut width available on request)

NECK DEPTH 22.63mm at first fret, 24.71mm at 9th fret

STRING SPACING 36mm at nut, 57mm at bridge

WEIGHT 1.85kg/4.08lb

LEFT HANDERS Yes

FINISH Honey Burst (as reviewed), Natural, Tobacco Burst and Vintage Amber gloss or open-pore nitrocellulose

CONTACT The North American Guitar thenorthamericanguitar.com, bngguitars.com

9/10 **The timber is breathtaking, B&G's finishing is up there with the best and if you're prepared to pay the premium you can have exactly the specs you want**

because fretting notes couldn't be much easier, yet slide playing still sounds clean and buzz-free.

Swapping over to the Private Build, despite the price disparity between the two models, the tonal differences aren't profound. We wouldn't go so far as to say that the Private Build's tone is indisputably superior to that of the Crossroads – it's just different.

There's a little more solidity in the bass and even more depth. At the other end of the spectrum, the treble isn't quite as ethereal, but it's a bit sweeter and gels more coherently with the overall tone to shift the emphasis ever so slightly to the midrange. The Private Build also has an even quicker and punchier attack that lends a nice percussive quality to the front of notes.

Even so, there's a more mild-mannered quality to the Private Build and the tone is perhaps a little more refined. The Crossroads model's tone seems mostly to come from the front of the guitar, but with the Private Build, there's a sense that it emanates from deeper inside the body. It's hard to say how much of that is attributable to the contrasting tonewoods and how much is attributable to the way in which these guitars were built. Indeed, with three other Private Build timber combinations to choose from, we suspect that there's something for all tastes. One thing common to both Caletta models, however, is that the boxy midrange honk typical of small-bodied 12-fretters is virtually nonexistent.

Where the Private Build romps into the distance is in terms of materials and the quality of the finish, although the Crossroads only suffers in comparison and taken in isolation, its build and finish impress greatly. But just as we have found with the Private Build and Crossroads versions of the Little Sister electric, B&G's in-house nitrocellulose finish has a depth and richness of colour that is simply gorgeous, as you can see.

As ever, the good old law of diminishing returns always seems to apply. If you're prepared to pay a premium to get a Private Build made to your specifications, then you won't be disappointed. But for the same money, you could have two Crossroads plus change, and it's really not that much of a compromise. **G**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

CALETTA CROSSROADS Martin 00-17S **£1,149**, Gibson L-00 Standard **£1,860**, Eastman E10-00SS/V **£1,399**

CALETTA PRIVATE BUILD Taylor Custom Grand Concert **£4,945**, Collings Baby 2H Baked **£4,395**, Atkin 0037S Aged Finish **£2,899**

WorldMags.net

WorldMags.net

Redbeard Effects is the brainchild of Skindred's Mikey Demus, in collbaoration with pedal guru Adrian Thorpe

REDBEARD EFFECTS
RED MIST MK IV

WORDS RICHARD PURVIS

Guitar.com EDITOR'S CHOICE

When Skindred guitarist Mikey Demus teams up with ThorpyFX to design his own distortion pedal, you know it's going to be rocking… and a bit clever

You don't see many guitarists actually making their own gear – well, it's a lot easier just to buy the stuff with all those Spotify royalties. Ahem. But when Mikey Demus of Skindred realised his perfect distortion pedal didn't quite exist, he decided to go out and make it happen himself… with a little help from one of the UK's most respected stompbox builders.

Skindred are a British band who play modern metal with a ragga twist. There's a lot of heavy drop-tuned riffage involved and Mikey usually relies on cranked Orange amps to bring the noise. The only trouble is, sometimes when you ask for Oranges, life gives you lemons – or at least, satsumas.

"We do a lot of festivals where we have to hire backline," he explains. "I normally use Orange amps and I can get away with something like a high-gain Marshall sometimes, but I was constantly having this problem where they'd provide a Fender Twin or a JTM45 – lovely amps, but they don't really do the detuned chuggy-chuggy thing that I depend on. So I'd always carry a couple of 'amp saver' pedals with me, but none of them were ever quite right.

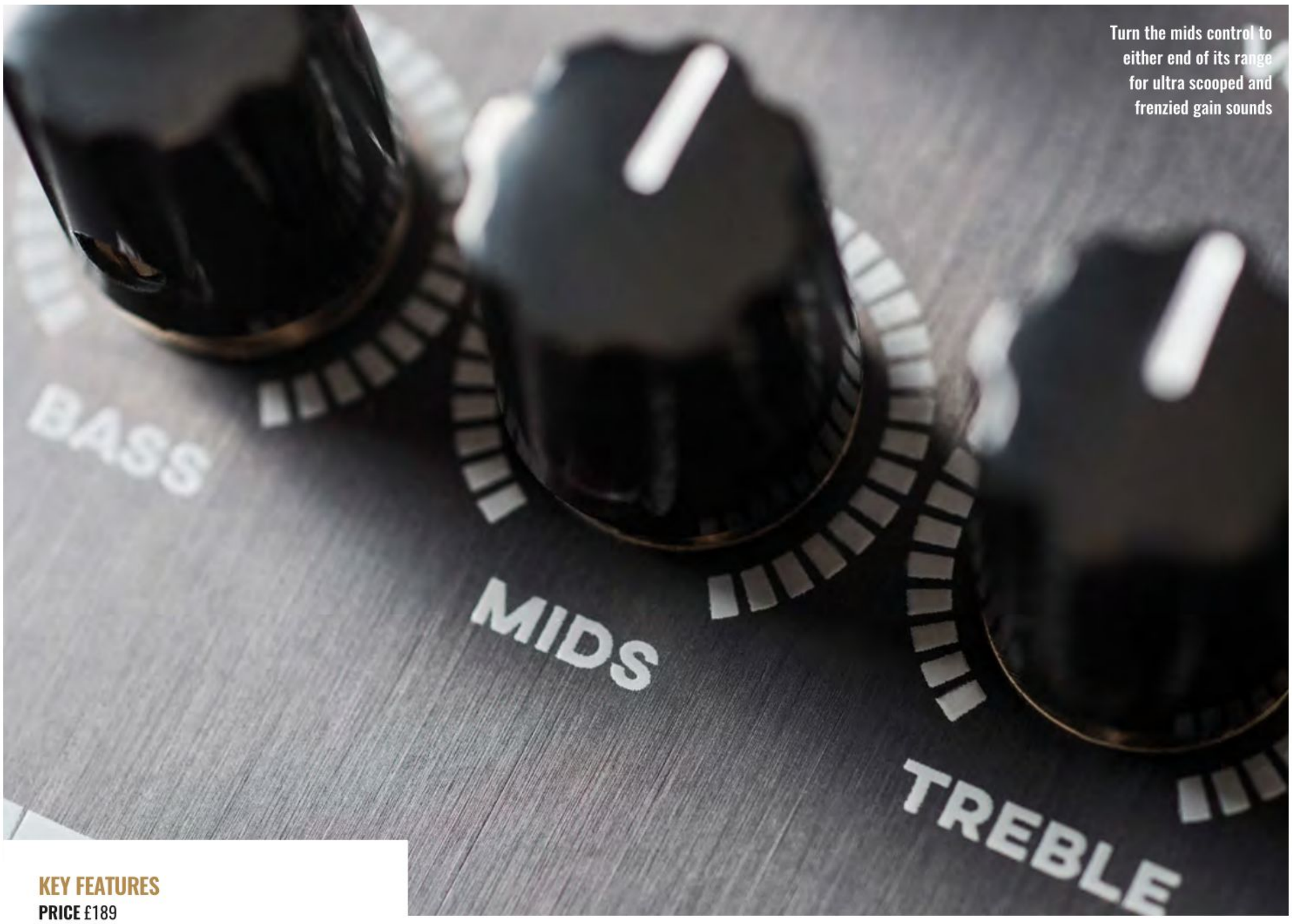
"Then I had an epiphany on a plane one day. I was thinking about the kind of pedal I wanted and what route I could take to get it, and it hit me: 'Why don't I just do this myself?' So I had the idea to start a company to put some edgy UK-made guitar effects out into the world – and the first task was to make a high-gain metal distortion pedal, something that could transform a relatively tame amplifier into a big box of doom and destruction."

He contacted ThorpyFX supremo Adrian Thorpe for advice, but that advice quickly turned into a new joint venture, named in honour of the guitarist's lustrous face-forestry. This, the Red Mist, is Redbeard Effects' first pedal… which does rather beg the question of why it's called Mk IV.

"Because I'm really fussy!" laughs Mikey. "This is the fourth version – I kept wanting more gain on tap and it was important not to lose the bottom end, as I do a fair bit of detuning and I'm the only guitarist in the band so I need a big sound… but it still had to retain the tightness you need for percussive riffing."

Helping users to dial in that balance of tightness and bassy thump is a three-way active tonestack, as well as the usual knobs for gain and output volume. The mids

WorldMags.net



Turn the mids control to either end of its range for ultra scooped and frenzied gain sounds

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £189
DESCRIPTION High-gain drive pedal. Made in UK
CONTROLS Gain, volume, bass, mids, treble
FEATURES True bypass, powered by 9V mains supply only (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS 126 x 69 x 60mm
CONTACT redbeardeffects.com

control is a gyrator-based bandpass filter and Mikey describes this as "the fun knob"… for reasons that will become clear soon enough.

It's a nice-looking compact pedal in a classy brushed-metal enclosure and close inspection – both inside and out – reveals something of the military-grade solidity of Adrian Thorpe's own products. In fact, the bit in the manual about one per cent metal-film resistors, WIMA and Panasonic capacitors and gold-plated PCBs could almost have been copied and pasted from the ThorpyFX website. Encouraging.

IN USE

Browse the many Skindred live videos on YouTube and you'll see left-hander Mikey grinding away on a range of fairly standard Fender and Gibson guitars, as well as a mighty sexy signature Manson; so no EMGs or pointy headstocks will be required for this test.

Step one, then, is to put our favourite SG into drop-D tuning and plug the Red Mist into a Blackface-style combo – the kind of amp that most definitely isn't capable of summoning the gods of hard rock by itself. The recommended start-off point for exploring this pedal is with all five controls just past halfway. It is, as expected, instant metal – and the sound just gets bigger and more addictive as you nudge the gain up towards full blast.

It does stay tight in the bottom end as promised and this a great tone for blasting out meaty low-down riffs as well as dancing up the fretboard for the occasional solo screech. Both bass and treble controls are highly responsive, allowing precise tonal tailoring to get the best out of your guitar and amp – and they can also be pushed to extremes if you're looking for gnarly 'character' sounds.

But the really bonkers bit of this pedal is that mids control. For most of its travel, it behaves conventionally, letting you push the middle frequencies for more Orange-style cut or dip them out for a fizzier, more devilish voice. Right at the ends of the dial, however, things get a bit strange.

Turn it fully anti-clockwise and there's a sudden plunge into ultra-scooped mode, which can be absolutely vicious depending on how reckless you are with the treble and bass knobs. The only drawback here is that the overall output drops significantly, but there's more than enough volume on tap to bring it back up to bypass level.

Then we crank the mids to full and a whole different species of wildness is unleashed. It's not clear exactly what's going on here, but it seems to involve an extra level of thick, frenzied gain – accompanied, as soon as you stop playing, by a self-oscillating feedback squeal that can be tuned (more or less) by tweaking the other controls. It's downright lethal; and if you've ever acted irresponsibly with a Z.Vex Fuzz Factory, you'll know how much fun this kind of chaos can be.

The Red Mist, then, is a solidly built box of pure metal with a couple of bonus tricks to lift it beyond mere doing-the-job competence into something more inspiring. It's a helluva debut from the Redbeard name – and there's more to come.

"We've already got a second pedal done and we're developing a third one at the moment," reveals Mikey. "The next one's pretty ludicrous in its own right – it's very different to the Red Mist, but still an extremely hazardous little box and the third will be the same again." Bring 'em on! *G*

9/10 **A mean little rock machine with a very talented mids control**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Revv G4 **£199**, Wampler Dracarys **£169**, Electro-Harmonix Metal Muff **£89**

WorldMags.net

LR BAGGS

PRESENTS

Handcrafted Video

LARKIN POE

Exclusive live performances of Black Betty,
Beach Blonde Bottle Blues, and Might As Well Be Me.

LRBAGGS.COM/LARKINPOE

WorldMags.net

THORPYFX
HEAVY WATER

WORDS RICHARD PURVIS

Based on the boosting side of The Dane overdrive/booster pedal, ThorpyFX's latest bombproof box is compact in size, but still lets you give 'em both barrels…

Some people just don't want an easy life. Faced with requests to turn the high-headroom boost circuit from the ThorpyFX Dane into a standalone pedal, Adrian Thorpe could have simply whipped out his hacksaw and created a two-knob tone machine.

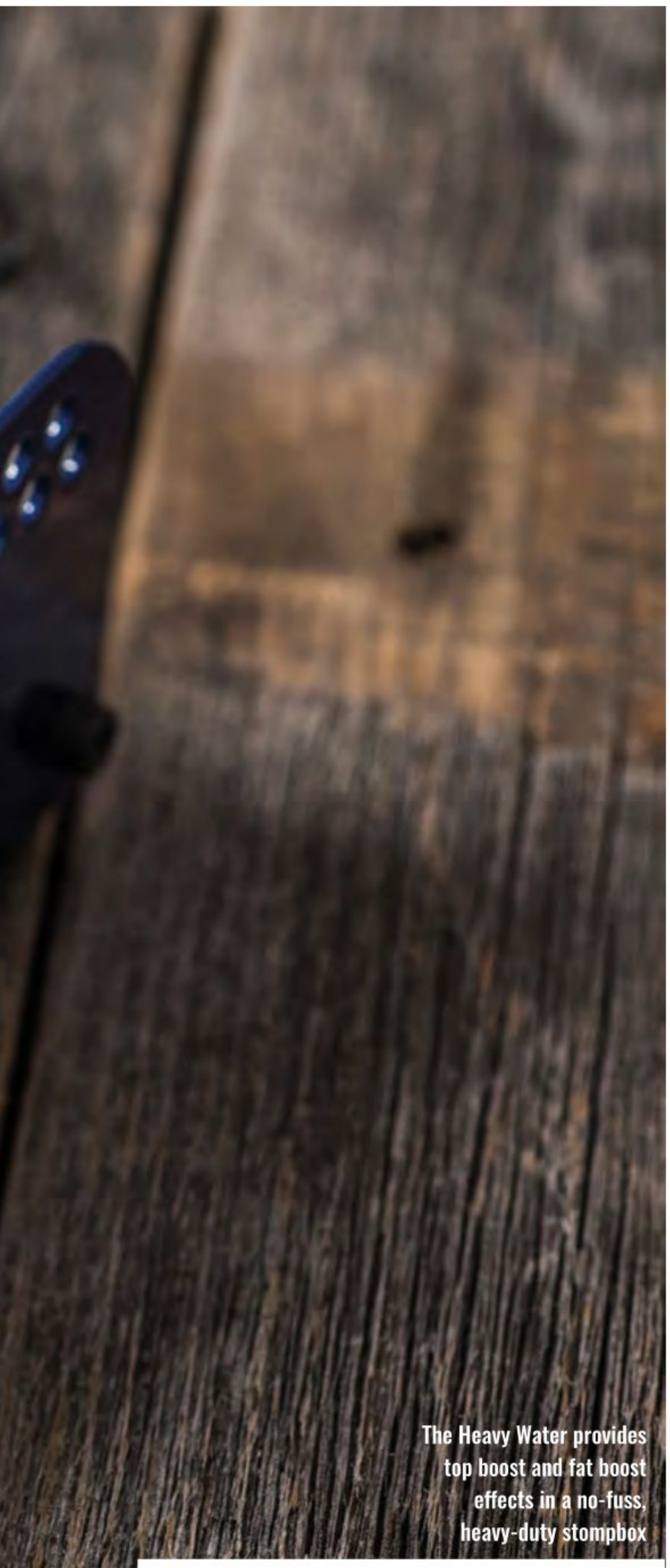
Instead, he's come up with the Heavy Water, a dual booster in a compact enclosure that offers a whole range of level-lifting options.

The right half of this unit is that Dane-derived clean boost, with a knob for output level and another for 'lows' – allowing you to thin things out or fatten them up as required. But the left side is a little different: it has the same controls, but uses germanium diodes for a grittier boost.

The good news is you can tap-dance between the two circuits or, if the front end of your amp needs to be spanked, run both at the same time. The short distance between the two footswitches means this option should be easy enough to engage from bypass, unless you're wearing the world's skinniest winkle-pickers.

It is a compact enclosure, but feels no less solid than this maker's heavier ordnance, with the usual metal side panels – this time in a rich aquatic blue – protecting the controls from knocks. Ex-Army officer Adrian loves his military references, of course; if you're wondering about the significance of this pedal's name, search Wikipedia for 'heavy water sabotage'… or even better, take the afternoon off and watch *The Heroes Of Telemark*.

WorldMags.net



The Heavy Water provides top boost and fat boost effects in a no-fuss, heavy-duty stompbox

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £189
DESCRIPTION Dual boost pedal. Made in UK
CONTROLS Boost 1 level and lows, boost 2 level and lows
FEATURES True bypass, powered by 9V mains supply only (not supplied)
DIMENSIONS 125 x 65 x 53mm
CONTACT ThorpyFX thorpyfx.com

IN USE

ThorpyFX is down with the current trend for making pedals mains-only and there's no battery compartment in this unit. So we start the test with a Telecaster, a 30-watt tweed combo and a good-quality power supply. It takes only the lightest push from the clean boost circuit to tip that amp into full-on overdrive – and with the lows control at midday, it's every bit as pure and transparent as we remember from the right-hand side of The Dane.

If you're not after a flat full-frequency boost, there's plenty of tone-sculpting power available. A twist to the right thickens things up for as much whoomph as your amp can handle, while winding it down brings a leaner sound with more space for the treble and upper mids to cut through, Rangemaster-style.

There isn't a huge change in sound when we switch to the germanium circuit, but you can feel the drop in headroom; and while the front end of the amp is still doing most of the overdriving work, there does seem to be a touch more grind on this side of the pedal.

In truth, though, the inherent differences between the Heavy Water's two circuits are not that important – what's key is the way you can set those tone controls for a warming effect on one side and a raspy treble boost on the other. That's giving you two very different kinds of lift for different musical needs… with the supremely powerful 'both' option waiting to be deployed when you need it. **G**

9/10 **Top boost, fat boost or both at once – a clever, space-efficient solution**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Xotic RC Booster V2 **£188**, TwinStomp Booster **£159**, Maxon DB10 Dual Booster **£145**

WorldMags.net

MOOER GE300

WORDS DARRAN CHARLES

Mooer continues its foray into the world of digital-modelling floorboard units and unleashes a new flagship model. Will cats who like Helix be tempted to stray?

Mooer continues to fix its sights firmly on becoming a major player in the world of digital modelling. We're used to seeing Mooer undercut the likes of Line 6 and Boss, but with the release of the GE300, it seems the Chinese company now wants a share of higher end of the market, too. It's a bold move – can the GE300 make inroads?

The relatively compact 410 x 201mm unit and small control panel belie the sheer number of features onboard, including a huge array of effects, amps, speaker cabinet models, a third-party impulse-response loader, a synth module, a looper and even the ability to use Mooer's Tone Capture tech to take a Kemper-esque snapshot of your own equipment.

The hub of the unit is the display, which illustrates the signal chain of each preset. That chain consists of your input and output and the virtual equipment in between, such as your amp, cabinet and pedals. Each component is represented by its own icon and has a corresponding soft button that is used either to switch it on or off within the signal path, or to select for editing.

The diminutive screen means you'll have to be in very close proximity to the unit in order to edit presets, however, a PC/Mac software interface allows editing to be done from your computer which, for studio work at least, will be the desired method of altering parameters.

There are two ways to configure the footswitches – the first enables us to use

WorldMags.net

the bottom row to switch between presets, allowing the top row to be used to toggle individual effects on or off within each preset. The second mode allows you to use the unit as a traditional pedalboard, where each preset is fixed and all eight footswitches can be assigned to various components of the signal chain – a delay or distortion, for example.

A variety of output methods are available: the four-cable method allows us to forgo digital amp and cab modelling and utilise the effects-only portion of the unit in conjunction with our guitar amplifier.

Most of us, however, will tend to either favour running straight into the PA via the XLR out, or into a power amp and corresponding FRFR cab. There is also the option to run both these signals simultaneously if you wish to use one for monitoring purposes.

Onboard the GE300, then, Mooer's aforementioned Tone Capture functionality has three distinct modes. In 'amp and stomp' mode, we are able to model an amp or drive pedal. 'Guitar mode' boasts – and it's a big boast – the ability to capture the unique tonal and EQ characteristics of your guitar as long as it has some form of pickup, while 'cab mode' allows you to replace pre-installed cabinet models with IRs of your own.

IN USE

We put the Mooer Tone Capture engine's amp-modelling abilities to the test when reviewing the Preamp Live and the results were pretty impressive, so the prospect of testing out 'guitar mode' is exciting. We immediately take it to the extreme and attempt to transform our high-output PRS Custom 24 into a single-coil-loaded, maple-neck Telecaster.

Sampling the 'target' tone (the guitar you wish to sound like) and then the source tone (the guitar you'll be using) is a surprisingly short process that takes just over a minute. The results are not as immediately impressive as the amp-modelling mode – certain nuances of the guitar are captured, but even though three frequency-band controls are provided for fine-tuning, we are never able to achieve a perfect facsimile of our Telecaster's tone through our PRS.

However, it must be said that the result is a decent-enough approximation. With 108 amp models and 164 effects, the palette

WorldMags.net

KEY FEATURES

PRICE £745
DESCRIPTION Multi-effects floor unit with digital modelling. Made in China
CONTROLS XLR and output master, headphone volume, 6x endless rotary encoders, 23x soft buttons, 10x footswitches, expression pedal
REAR PANEL Mini-jack auxiliary input, EXP 2 jack input, guitar/line jack input (switchable), stereo send and return, stereo jack outputs, 1/4-inch headphone output, stereo XLR out, ground lift, MIDI In, MIDI Out/Thru, USB, power on/off, DC input (mains power only)
DIMENSIONS 410 x 201 x 62mm
WEIGHT 3kg/6.61lb
CONTACT Strings & Things stringsandthings.co.uk, mooeraudio.co.uk

8/10 **With huge versatility and depth, this deserves a place on your must-try list**

of sounds available (the majority of them based on Mooer's successful Micro Preamp series) run the full tonal gamut, catering for every stylistic requirement. We're drawn to our favourite classic Marshall and Fender-type tones and they indeed prove to be worthy recreations.

Moving along the presets, we find ourselves transfixed by 'USGOLD 100' – a profile of the mighty Friedman BE100. There is a wonderful depth of tone to this model and its dynamic responsiveness adds to the convincing illusion we're playing through a real amp.

It's fair to say that we're now at the stage in the evolution of digital modelling technology during which subjective appraisal is more concerned with nuanced attributes such as depth of tone or dynamic response than 'good' or 'bad', with the higher-priced stalwarts Fractal and Kemper still providing the benchmark.

Whereas the Preamp Live has little competition in its price range, the GE300 faces stiffer opposition, most notably from Line 6's Helix LT. The Californian company has a long-established reputation, whereas Mooer is an emerging force.

It's difficult to predict a winner, but the sheer number of effects and options onboard make the Mooer GE300 a definite contender for your money. **G**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Fractal Audio FM3 **£1,150**, Line 6 Helix LT **£769**, Kemper Profiler Stage **£1,449**

WorldMags.net

Vintage®

Vintage REISSUED Series™

V65

Guitars Built For The Working Musician

Angular and chaotic, just like the sound it contains, the brand new Vintage V65 is the perfect instrument for those players who operate on the fringes of guitar society. Play on.

#VINTAGETONE @VintageInstruments @vintageguitars_official

jhs
www.jhs.co.uk

DISCOVER THE LEGEND

SUPRO®

BLUES KING 8

The Blues King 8 is a modern rendition of the low-wattage Supro amplifiers that were produced in Chicago during the mid 1950s. Every element of the Blues King 8 amplifier was developed from scratch to deliver the legendary headroom and dynamics that define the vintage Supro sound.

SUPROUSA.COM

jhs
www.jhs.co.uk

Find your nearest Supro stockist at:
www.jhs.co.uk/storelocator

Guitars | Amplifiers | Effects | Accessories

MONOCREATORS.COM/PFX

ELEVATE YOUR PERFORMANCE

DESIGN THE PERFECT SETUP.
MONO pedalboards, risers and accessories combine to keep your setup neat and sleek, for absolute pedal access with no distractions from your music.

Follow us
@MONOCREATORS

mono®

WorldMags.net

DIY WORKSHOP

HOW TO BUILD A SPEAKER CABINET

PART ONE

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY HUW PRICE

Following on from our Bell & Howell Filmosound projector-amp conversion project, it's time to make some decisions about speakers and figure out how to house it in a cabinet…

WorldMags.net

RIGHT Two salvaged pine planks will be used to build the cabinet and auspiciously, there are traces of Surf Green paint

ABOVE RIGHT A pro table saw makes light work of cutting the planks to size, but be careful where you put your fingers

BELOW RIGHT The easy bit is done – and with the planks cut, the real work begins

I've never made a cabinet before, let alone designed one, but now I'm doing both. Besides a working knowledge of the sonic characteristics of open and closed backs and a basic understanding of the arguments for resonant versus acoustically inert cabinets, I don't know much about the subject. So instead, I'm going to go with gut instinct and hope for the best.

Firstly, I need to figure out the cabinet size and speaker combination that best suit the sound of the Filmosound amp. I decide the best way to do this is through experimentation and so I borrow a bunch of cabinets to audition. The Tayden 15-inch alnico unit currently residing in my mate Simon's tweed Fender Pro sounds huge and mellow at low to medium volume levels, but at higher levels, the low-end sounds a bit too dominant and I decide it's a better match for the Pro circuit.

A Celestion Blue won't cope with the Filmosound's circa 20-watt power output, but I do like the way the Filmosound interfaces with a Celestion Ruby and Fane A60. I'm veering towards the latter until I try a pair of Celestion 10-inch speakers in a tweed Super cabinet – a Gold alnico and a Vintage 10.

A larger cabinet with two speakers produces a bigger sound, with tight and punchy lows, articulate mids and really pretty upper harmonics. I like the sound even more when I swap the Vintage 10 for a Celestion G10M Greenback. The complicating factor is how I'm going to mount the Filmosound inside the cabinet.

Most of the companies offering rebuilt Filmosound amps, such as Old Amps and At Mars, offer them as a head rather than a combo. The amplifiers were designed to bolt into the underside of Bell & Howell's projector chassis with the valves upright and the mains transformers and EF37 pentode in the V1 position are both fairly tall, so mounting the amp upright at the base of a head makes sense. The controls are all at the front, the valves don't need retainers to prevent them from working loose and falling out – and there's sufficient space above the chassis to keep things cool.

Taking some inspiration from Michiel Helsloot's Elektra 185 amplifier, I decide to build a taller-than-standard combo cabinet. This will leave sufficient headroom above the side-by-side 10-inch speakers to mount the Filmosound on a sliding shelf – much like Vox did with vintage AC30 combos. The plan is to make cutouts in the front baffle for the speakers and the Filmosound's front panel. In order to decide on the dimensions, I lay two speakers out on a large piece of hardboard and position the amp above them. This gives me the baffle size required, and from that I can add on 0.75 inches all round for the cabinet timber. I end up with outside dimensions of 24.5 inches (622mm) wide and 22.5 inches (571mm) tall. The tweed Super's outside dimensions are 22 x 18 inches.

MATERIAL BENEFITS

These days, there's a lot of interest in repurposed materials in guitar and amp

WorldMags.net

TOP LEFT In the absence of a thickness sander, a small inverted router table elevated on runners can be used to level and thickness timber

ABOVE One-inch box joints are cut using a Japanese razor saw and a jeweller's saw, with a square-sided file cleaning up the corners

LEFT Cascamite is used to glue the joints and these two Stanley band clamps keep everything solid and square

BELOW LEFT Making this jig for routing circular holes couldn't be much simpler and you only need a bolt and a plank of wood

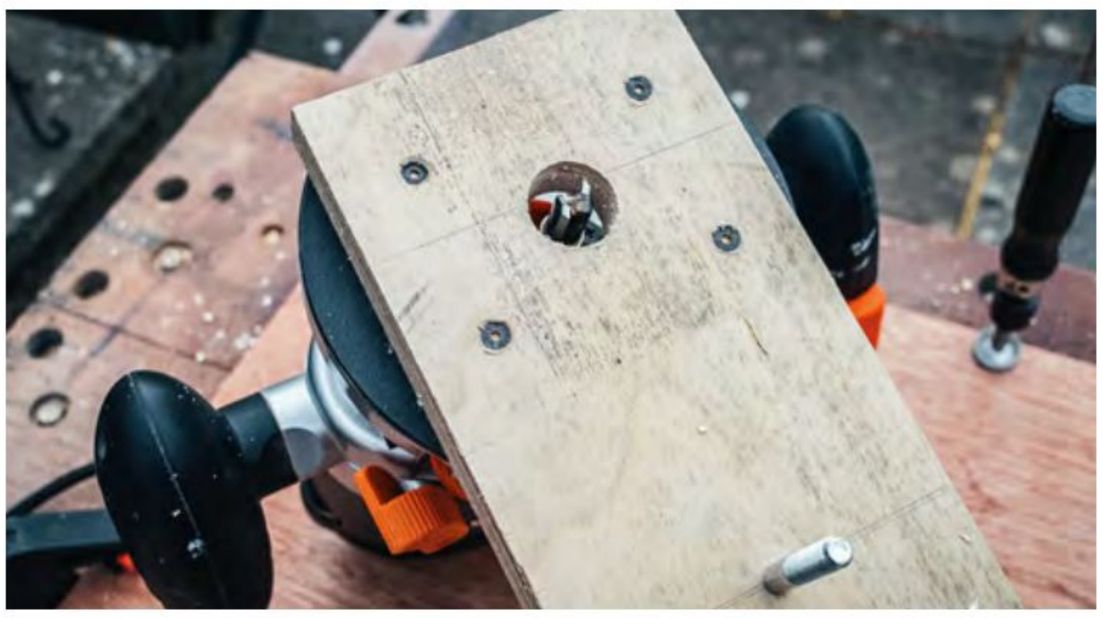
BOTTOM The circular routing jig is tested on a scrap piece of plywood and it works perfectly

manufacturing. I can't claim building amp cabinets from recycled wood benefits tone, but it can't do any harm and it feels a lot better from an environmental perspective.

I head off to my local architectural salvage yard and purchase two old pine shelves that were removed from an old shoe shop in Cardiff. They have a dusty orange look, feel quite light and ring when I tap them.

I don't have a table saw, so my good friend Mike Phillips of classiccase.co.uk kindly helps me out. Before long, I have four sides cut to length and width and I still have all my fingers. The depth is a bit shallower than the nine inches I'm shooting for, so I graft offcuts onto the rear edges using Titebond Original glue.

For added strength, I drill through the glued-on pieces and into the main sections and then fill the holes with Titebond and tap in dowels. Once the glue has set, I trim the dowel ends flush and the results are pretty solid. The other issue with the wood I sourced is that it's about 1/8-inch



WorldMags.net

ABOVE This rear view of the speaker hole shows the jig's centre bolt and the small uncut area that is finished by hand

ABOVE RIGHT Following a successful test cut, the speaker positions are marked out on the baffle for cutting

RIGHT After the cuts, a full-sized photo of the front panel is positioned on the baffle to determine the position for the control-panel cutout

FAR RIGHT The control-panel opening is rough cut undersize with a jigsaw and our MDF router template positioned on top with double-sided tape

too thick and not exactly flat across the flat sides. Rather than pay someone to run the planks through a thickness sander, I fix one side to a backing board in between two runners using double-sided tape.

My router is mounted on my small homemade 'table' and flipped upside down. The 'table' slides on the runners and I make a few passes, lowering the cutting bit each time, until I have a flat surface and the board is the required 3/4-inch thickness. I do the same for the other three boards and it's time to get the sides jointed up.

THIS ONE TIME, AT BAND CLAMP

I decide on simple box joints to join the corners and set about carefully marking and measuring. Everything appears to be going well, until I realise that although the outside surfaces are perfectly flat, the inside surfaces are not.

In effect, I have to make all the box joints a custom fit for each and every piece of wood. It turns out to be way more work than I had anticipated, but I'll chalk it up to experience – next time, I'll level both sides of the boards. The box joints are marked one inch apart and I draw along the inside surfaces of each piece to establish the required depth.

A new Japanese razor saw is purchased for the occasion. It cuts on the pull stroke and it's an absolute joy to use. With the depth cuts done, I use a jeweller's saw to cut across the grain to create the boxes. I can't claim this is the best bit of joinery I've ever done and there are some shameful gaps, but for the most part, the joints are pretty tight.

Before glueing everything together, I need to rout a rebate along the front inside edge of each piece. The idea is to create a ledge for the speaker baffle, so I can drop it into the frame and glue it in place to solidify the structure.

I set up my router table with a square cutting bit and a guide fence to cut the rebates in three stages. I've learned from cutting the box joints that this pine is dry and tends to chip out. This procedure goes quite smoothly, although I forget that I need to stop short at each end. With the sides glued together, I'll have to fill four small gaps. Well, I did say it's the first time I've done this!

At last, it's time to glue the outer structure together and I decide to use Cascamite glue because it's ultra strong, sets crystal hard and has a long open time. It also fills gaps very nicely and my shoddy box joints certainly need that. The only drawback is that Cascamite takes about 24 hours to fully cure.

Holding the box square as the glue goes off is critical. Sash clamps are one option, but they're cumbersome and quite expensive. Having enjoyed myself so far, I'm pretty certain I'm going to be doing more cabinet builds in the future, so I decide

WorldMags.net

SOUNDPAD

Tel 01271 323686 | **www.soundpad.co.uk** | **info@soundpad.co.uk**

SINCE 1972 — **Service Second to None** Online & Instore

Next Working Day Delivery Available in the UK from £12

Take it away — **Finance Available** Call for more details

More Information & High Resolution Photos Online at **www.soundpad.co.uk**

Featured

Fender 2003 Victor Bailey

- Circa 2003
- Koa, & Rosewood over Mahogany Body
- Rosewood Fingerboard
- Fender SCN (Samarium Cobalt Noiseless) Pickups
- 3 Band Active EQ
- Hard Case Included

Pre-owned **£1,499**

Here is a beautiful and unique Fender Victor Bailey Signature Jazz Bass Guitar. The body features a unique blend of woods: Koa, Rosewood and Mahogany. The gold hardware sets the bass off nicely including all Gold Knobs, Gold Plated Steel Bridge, Gold Schaller style Fender tuners and Gold applied Fender Logo. The Dual Samarium Cobalt Noiseless Pickups and a warm articulate tone. Teamed with the active 3 band EQ, this bass is a real power house! The 18v Active circuit is powered by 2 9v batteries, inserted into the back of the bass. Although second hand, this bass is in good condition. It has been well loved so there are some marks and dings. See photos on our website. Included is the original Hard Case. The case has had a replacement catch fitted. The bass comes professionally setup with a 3 month warranty.

Recent arrivals..

New **£1,699**

Ibanez AZ24202 ICM Prestige

Finished in Ice Blue Metallic. Roasted Maple Neck. Seymour Duncan Hyperion Pickups. Dyna-MIX 10 Switching. Includes Hard Case.

New **£1,689**

Fender American Elite Stratocaster

Finished in Aged Cherry Burst. Maple Neck. S1 Switching. Compound Profile Neck. Locking Machine Heads. Includes Hard Case.

Pre-owned **£1,899**

Taylor T3 (Tobacco Sunburst)

Circa 2008/9. Quilted Maple Top. Ebony Fingerboard. Dual High Definition Humbucking Pickups. Original Hard Case Included.

Pre-owned **£699**

Epiphone Popa Chubby Korina Flying V

Made in 2001 in Korea. Korina Body. Maple Neck with Rosewood fingerboard. P90 Pickups. Includes Hard Case. Photos Online.

Pre-owned **£3,499**

Gibson 2016 SJ-200 Vintage

SJ22VNGH1. Thermally Aged Adirondack Red Spruce Top. Maple B&S. Rosewood fingerboard. LR Baggs Pickup. Hard Case & Docs.

New **£2,499**

Martin USA GPCA1 Plus

Performing Artist Grand Performance. East Indian Rosewood Back & Sides. Solid Spruce Top. Built in Fishman F1 Pickup. Hard Case.

Pre-owned **£899**

Ovation C2078AXP-AF Elite Plus

Finished in Okoume Feather. Unique Lyrachord Back & Sides. Deep Contour Body Design. Built in Pickup System. Hard Case.

New **£799**

PRS SE Angelus Limited Edition

Figured Koa Burst Back & Sides. Solid Spruce Top. Mahogany Neck with Ebony Fingerboard. Built in Fishman Pickup. Hard Case.

New **£2,379**

Rickenbacker 4003 (Fireglo)

Brand New. 2019 Model. A classic Ricki Design. Rosewood fingerboard. Maple Body with through neck. Includes Hard Case.

New **£2,359**

Rickenbacker 4003 (Midnight Blue)

Brand New. A classic Ricki Design. 20 Frets. Rosewood fingerboard. Maple Body with through neck. Includes Hard Case.

Pre-owned **£1,099**

Sandberg Basic VM4EB (Black Satin)

Made in Germany. Ash Body. Sixfold bolted Neck. Ebony Fingerboard. Split Coil & Humbucker Pickups. Active 2 Band EQ.

New **£2,159**

Fender Jaco Pastorius Jazz Bass

Fretless bass. Signature Model. American Vintage Pickups. C Shape Neck. Nitrocellulose Sunburst finish. Includes Hard Case.

Pre-owned **£2,899**

Taylor 814CE Grand Auditorium

Circa 2011. Made in El Cajon, USA. Rare Sunburst Finish. Spruce Top. Rosewood Back & Sides. Expression Pickup. Hard Case & Docs.

Pre-owned **£1,499**

Taylor 412e Grand Concert

Solid Sitka Spruce Top. Solid Ovangkol Back & Sides. Built in Taylor Expression 2 Pickup System. With Original Hard Case and Docs.

Pre-owned **£1,999**

Taylor 524e Grand Auditorium

All Mahogany. Built in Expression 2 Pickup System. Made from Tropical Mahogany. Ebony Fingerboard. Original hardcase & docs.

Pre-owned **£999**

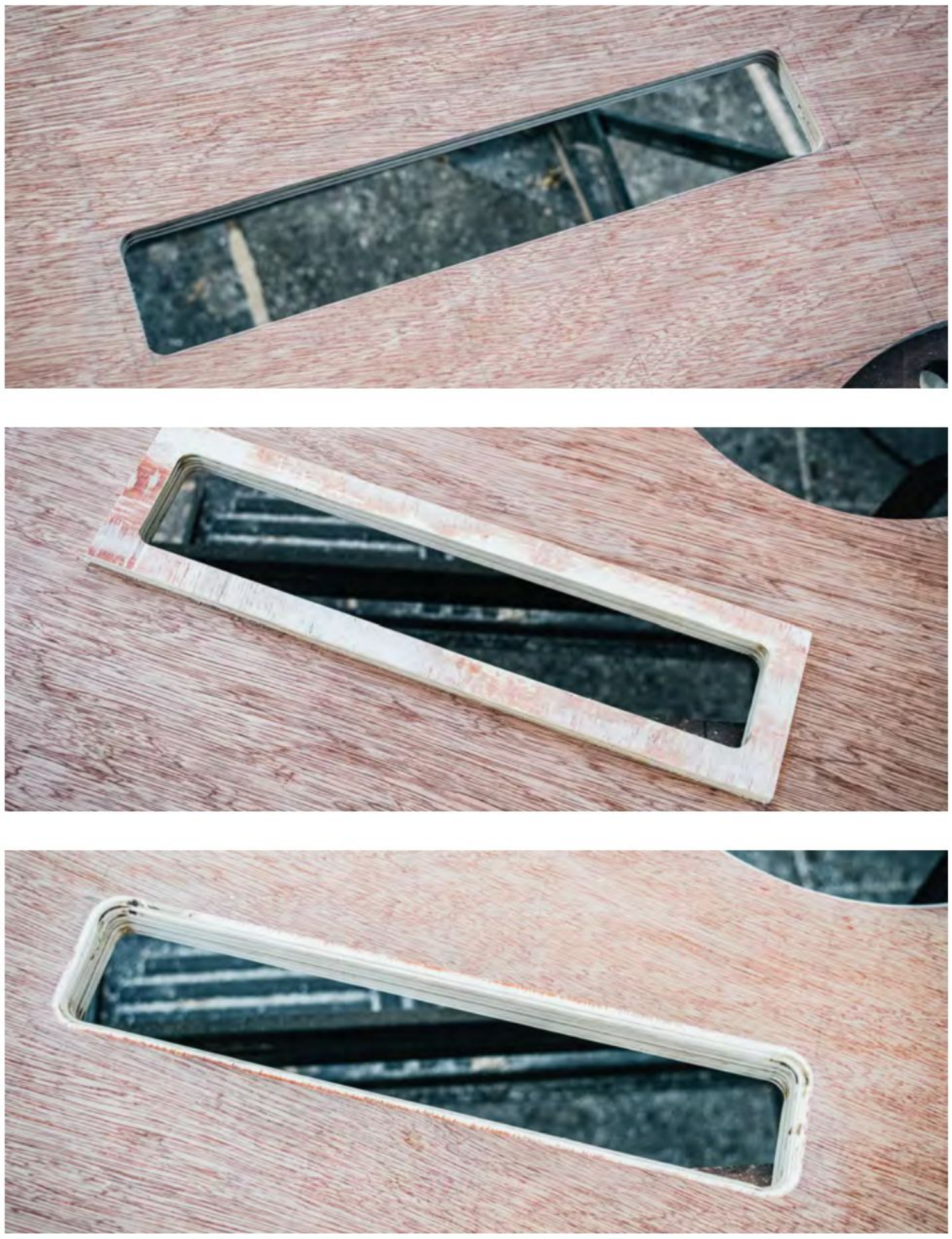
Fender '65 Deluxe Reverb

22 watts. 12" Jenson Speaker. All Valve. Normal & Vibrato Channels. Spring Reverb. Circa 1990. Recently serviced & PAT tested.

Soundpad Ltd. Units 1&2, Rolle Quay House, Rolle Quay, Barnstaple, North Devon. EX31 1JE.
Opening Times: Mon-Sat: 9.30am - 5.30pm. **Sunday:** Closed

WorldMags.net

All pre-owned Instruments and Equipment carry full 3 months warranty (parts & labour). All prices include VAT.



to buy a couple of Stanley band clamps. They're pretty heavy duty and when I do a dry run, I'm delighted to find that the cabinet pieces pull together dead square.

A quantity of Cascamite is mixed up, applied to every surface of the box joints and they're soon assembled. Before doing this, I'm careful to give each of the corners a letter code, so there's no confusion about which parts go together. I also prep the band clamps so the corners can slip over the joints with very little slack and be tightened quickly.

Once the clamps are tightened, I use a set square to verify that all the corners are at 90 degrees and everything looks good. After the required glueing period, I remove the clamps and breathe a big sigh of relief.

GETTING BAFFLED

My local B&Q provides a very accurate and clean timber-cutting service, so I purchase a piece of 12mm plywood sheet and have it cut to the size I need for the baffle. When I get it home, it actually drops straight into the routed recess channels.

It's time to mark the speaker positions onto the baffle and figure out how I'm going to cut the portholes. I decide to mount my router onto a length of plywood with a hole cut for the router bit and a second hole drilled 4.5 inches away from the outside edge of the bit. I push a bolt through the second hole and the plan is to drill holes in the centre of the speaker cutout, push the bolt through and secure it tight with a washer and a wing bolt.

This should allow the router to swivel around the centre point and cut a perfect circle. I test it out on a scrap piece of ply and it works perfectly. It's best to cut through the ply in three or four passes, going a little deeper each time.

On the final pass, I stop routing just as the cutout piece starts to wobble. At that point I carefully snap off the cutout, leaving a small amount of ply protruding from the edge and clean it up with a rasp to leave perfectly smooth cut edges. With both speaker portholes cut, I mount the baffle back onto the cabinet and screw it down tight.

AMP MOUNTING

As much as I like the look of retro-style amps such as Supros and Swarts, I prefer having the controls easily accessible – even when there are only two knobs. That means I have to cut a letterbox-shaped hole in the front panel and I need to make a template to do it.

I carefully measure the Filmosound's front panel and settle on a hole size that's very slightly smaller in height and width. The shape is marked out on a piece of MDF and I cut it out roughly using a jigsaw. A piece of scrap wood with straight sides is cut to create a guide for a flush-cutting bearing bit. The wood pieces are fixed to the MDF with double-sided tape; I clean up the edges of the hole using the router bit.

WorldMags.net

Once I've decided on the position of the amp, I use my routing template to draw the shape of the opening onto the baffle. Again, I rough cut the undersized hole using a jigsaw after first scoring around the cut lines using a utility knife. This ensures that any chips in the top layer of plywood will spread no further than the scored lines.

After taping the router template in position, I rout the control-panel opening. In order to protect the controls, the amp must be set further back than the thickness of the baffle.

My solution is to cut a rectangle of plywood, glue it onto the rear of the baffle and rout the opening using the first cutout to guide the router bit.

A rollover router bit applies the finishing touches by softening the edges of the speaker holes and control panel hole. I locate and drill the speaker bolt holes and then I screw the completed baffle onto the cabinet.

Next, I make a plywood shelf for the amp and after careful calculations, I decide where the shelf supports should be positioned. Batons are glued onto the inside panels and strengthened with screws for added insurance.

With the speakers loaded and the amp installed, it's all looking good. Next time, I'll be gluing the baffle into the frame, making the rear panels, rounding over the cabinet edges and applying the covering, speaker cloth and finishing touches. **G**

TOP LEFT After running a bearing-guided flush-cutting router bit around the template, we're left with a neat opening for the controls

TOP LEFT MIDDLE A small piece of ply is glued to the rear of the control-panel opening and the flush cutting bit is used to true up the inside edges

TOP LEFT BOTTOM A bearing-guided rollover bit is used to round the edges of the baffle openings before assembly

ABOVE With an amp shelf resting on ledges that are glued and screwed to the sides and the speakers mounted, stage one of the cabinet build is complete

CRIMSON
Luthiery School
3 MONTH GUITAR BUILDING COURSES
Prices start at £4,495
Next available course dates:
September - December 2019
January - April 2020
June - August 2020
Where you turn your hobby into a Career
For more information:
crimsonguitars.com
01300 348863

© Getty Images

The best blues guitarists build a distinctive vocabulary by creating variations on what has gone before

WorldMags.net

ESSENTIAL BLUES LESSONS

PART 11 COMBINING RHYTHM WITH BASIC LICKS

WORDS LEIGH FUGE

Our Essential Blues Lessons are heating up! Here, we look at ways to combine what we've been learning so far to form the basis for our own licks

Now that we're nearly a full year into this series, we've learnt a lot about technique, rhythm and some scale shapes that we'll be using. It's high time for us to consider ways we can begin putting this knowledge together and creating some basic blues licks.

One of the great things about blues is how inclusive it is. It doesn't matter what level you are at, you can still reap the benefits of playing it. The licks we discuss in this lesson will be a great starting point and as the complexity of the series increases, these principles will still apply.

In this lesson, we're combining a lot of the information we have learned over the previous 10 parts. We will be using some of the legato techniques we learnt in lesson seven, the pentatonic first shape and second shape and some string bending we learnt in lesson 10. Check out *Guitar.com* to catch up with any lessons you've missed. Each of these five licks will be simple note formations combining elements of the technique and theory aspects we've learnt so far. As always, all examples are in the key of A minor.

LICK 1

This first lick is a short lick based around the first shape of the minor pentatonic scale. This lick starts with two eighth-note groupings of hammer-ons ascending across the fourth (D) and third (G) strings on beats 1 and 2. Each of the two hammer-on groups are a picked fifth fret with a hammer on to the seventh fret. This is followed by a full-step bend which lasts for a quarter note and a fretted note on the fifth fret, which also lasts for a quarter note.

LICK 2

This lick utilises pull-offs and more of the scale in one go. It starts with descending eighth notes running through the first shape of the scale. On each beat in the first bar, you will be picking the highest note and pulling off to the lowest.

Repeat this all the way down to the fourth (D) string. In the second bar, you begin with two bends, both a full step each, using the seventh fret of the third (G) string. This takes place on beats 1 and 2.

On beats 3 and 4, you have a single picked note on each, the fifth fret on the third (G) and the seventh fret on the fourth (D) string.

LICK 3

This lick combines the first and second shapes of the minor-pentatonic scale. The lick is predominantly based on the first (high E) string, starting with a three-note phrase that takes you from shape one to shape two. The initial three notes on the (first (high E) string are played on the '& 4 &' of the previous bar.

On the first and second beats of the second bar, you will be playing a full-step bend on the 10th fret. The phrase ends with two 16th notes moving from the eighth fret of the first (high E) to the 10th fret of the second (B) string. This lick has a BB King feel, so try to add a little swing to it. Keep loose and don't worry about playing it too tightly.

WorldMags.net

Standard tuning

♩ = 120

LICK 4

This next lick is similar to something Eric Clapton might play. The lick is broken up into triplets. A triplet is when three notes of the same length fit over one beat of music. This gives the lick a sense of urgency and creates the impression that it's a lot faster than it is. The first three beats contain the repeated triplet. It is made up of the ninth fret on the third (G) string and the eighth and 10th frets on the second (B) string. The hardest part is getting the picking consistent – start slowly. Each note should be the same length. You could also hammer on between the eighth and 10th frets.

LICK 5

This lick is another triplet lick, but this time we will be using some sliding techniques to emulate a bottleneck-guitar-type sound. The triplet in this lick is ninth fret of the third (G) string, eighth fret of the second (B string) and ninth fret of the third (G) again. To emulate a slide guitar, you want to slide your finger into the ninth fret.

It doesn't matter where you start this slide, the main aim is to have the sound of a sliding note into its target note. Keep the slide limited to one or two frets; it's not a slide where you need to hear the initial note, you just need the sound of the sliding string into the 9th fret.

TRY IT YOURSELF

The licks in this lesson are transposable to any other key using the first and second shapes of the minor-pentatonic scale. Using these principles, you can start to form your own ideas on lick building. Start with just a few notes and imagine what combinations you can play to make them sound interesting.

Think of technique, note length and melodies. Imagine a melody in your head and try to recreate that on the guitar, and think about how technique can embellish that melody to add flow to it. **G**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leigh Fuge is a guitar teacher and professional musician from Swansea in the UK. He has taught hundreds of students face to face and via the MGR Music platform. He has over 10 years' experience working in the industry as a touring musician, session guitarist and teacher. To find a qualified guitar teacher in your local area, visit mgrmusic.com.

WorldMags.net

Watford Valves

24 HOUR ONLINE ORDERING AT www.watfordvalves.com
All valves individually multi-tested and digitally matched.
Expert advice on all valve amps.
THE MUSICIANS CHOICE ☎ 01923 893270

CRYOGENIC

AC/DC, Oasis, Brian May, Manics, Radiohead and Peter Gabriel buy our valves

*** WINTER SPECIAL ***

Marshall EL34B £10.26 Each

Genuine Marshall EL34B with Marshall logo printed on the valve

Soundwise these EL34 valves have it all. In clean mode they have a harmonic open top which provides a warm transparent and sparkling clean sound. When overdriven the valve has a nice crunchy early break up. These are all burnt in and premium selected by Marshall and then Dual matched by us.

These premium quality Marshall EL34B just £10.26 each with code GBNOV10

Bulk discounts available see our website for details

VALVE KITS FOR EVERY AMP - See our website for full details

SPECIAL OFFER ON JJ VALVE KITS

Our JJ revalve kits consist of a specially selected set of JJ ECC83 S preamp valves combined with selected and matched sets of JJ output valves. All preamp valves in our kits are specially selected and include a balanced valve for the phase inverter position. All output valves are burnt in and dual matched on current and output gain.

Fender Blues/Hot Rod Deville deluxe	**£69.60**	**Mesa Single Rectifier**	**£100.80**
Marshall JCM 900 Series 2500	**£65.40**	**Vox AC30 Custome Series**	**£80.40**

Kits for all amps - Black Star, Bugera, Cornford, Engl, Fender, Laney, Marshall, Mesa Boogie. Orange, Victory, Vox etc full details on website

CELESTION SPEAKERS

Many models on free delivery - see our website for details

Celestion G12 Super 65 - special 65 watt 4 ohm ONLY £30

Big discounts on all Guitar and Bass Speakers
10% OFF ALL 12 inch guitar speakers when you use this code GBNOV10
Full range in stock, see our website

MAIL ORDER Fax: 01923 679207

☎ **01923 893270**

SOLO SWITCH VISA

see our new website
www.watfordvalves.com

© Olivia Hemingway/Redferns/Getty Images

Learn how to play John Frusciante-style fingerpicked chords with our lesson

CHORD CLINIC

HOW TO PLAY RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS-STYLE CHORDS PART TWO

WORDS ROD FOGG

John Frusciante stands out as the most influential of the Red Hot Chili Peppers' guitar players. In Part Two of our examination of the Stratocaster-slinger's guitar style, we concentrate on chord voicings and sequences

Looking at figure 1, you might say we have a normal chord followed by an abnormal chord. The D major chord is a common movable shape that can be played all over the guitar. The Em7/D voicing is fixed in this one position, mixes fretted notes with open strings, unusually doubles the minor seventh and has the open fourth (D) string as its bass note.

Give each chord two bars of vigorous strumming on your electric. You'll need tidy fingering to get all the notes of the Em7/D to sound cleanly. Also, add some compression – Frusciante is a known user of the famous little MXR Dyna Comp. Em7/D is 'E minor seven with D bass'. We call this type of chord a slash chord; the note that comes after the forward slash is a specified bass note.

The RHCP are masters of four-chord sequences. Fortunately, they very rarely use the commonplace I-V-VI-IV, which in the key of A would be A, E, F#m, D. In figure 2, we have a four-chord sequence in A that bears no relation to the above, consisting of I-Imaj7-♭VII-II.

While most of these barre chord shapes are part of the language of rock guitar, major-seventh chords are unusual, belonging more to jazz and soul.

If you have problems moving from the A barre chord to the major seventh, notice that your pinky is already in the right place for the second chord, so leave it there while you rearrange the other three fingers. Also allow your thumb to come over the edge of the fingerboard to touch and mute the sixth string, so that you can strum and hear the open A, not E, in the bass.

If you loop figure 2 around a few times, you may find that you need a way out. Cue figure 3, and some more of those unusual Frusciante chords. Give the first two chords a bar each, and then crash into the big open-string E minor chord and let it ring for two bars. Repeat figures two to three as you like; you could even try starting with figure 1.

In our previous instalment, we mentioned how diminished chords are rare; we probably don't need to mention that 7#5 chords are just as exceptional. Except, that is, in Frusciante-land, where in Part One we found a B augmented triad, which is a very

WorldMags.net

FIGURE 1

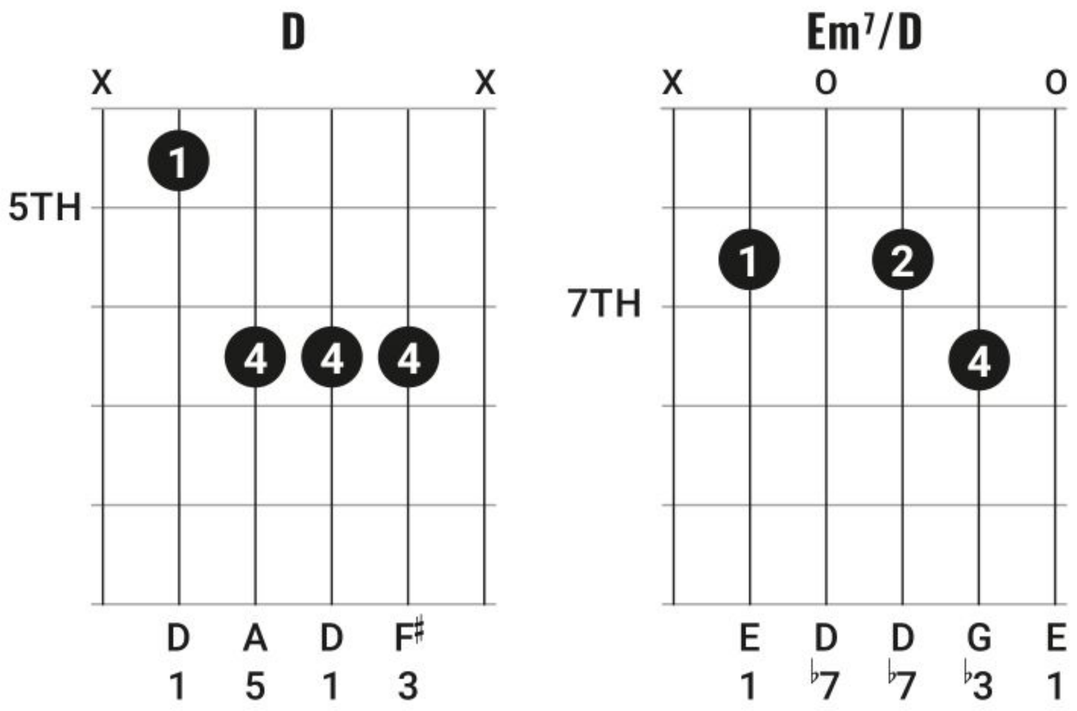


FIGURE 2

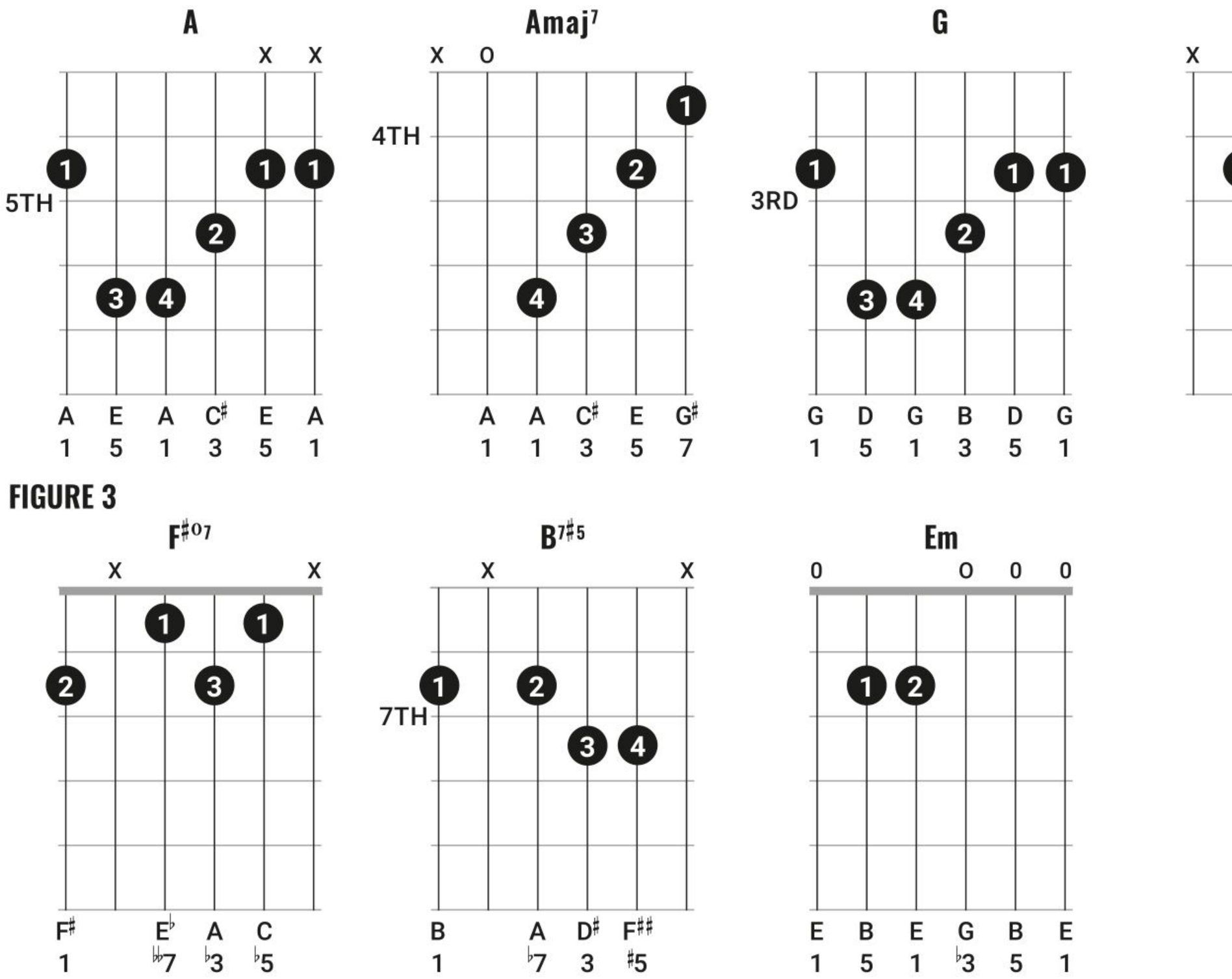
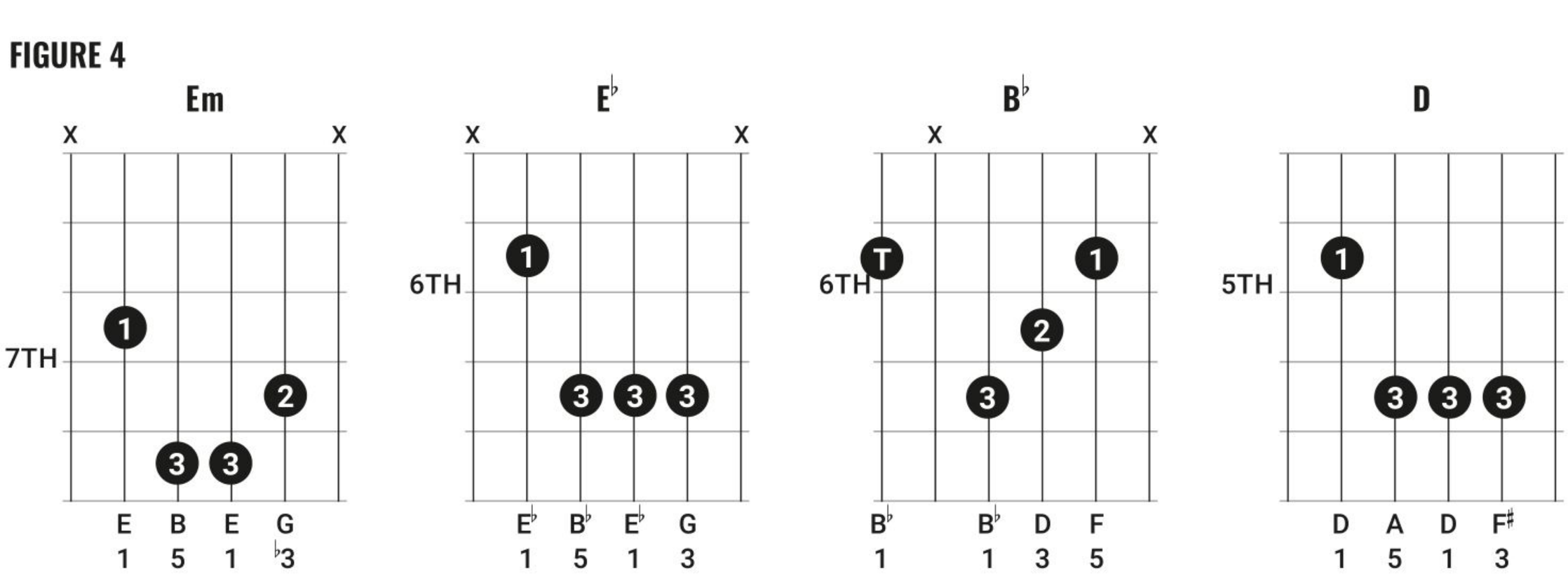


FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4



WorldMags.net

FIGURE 4 CONTINUED

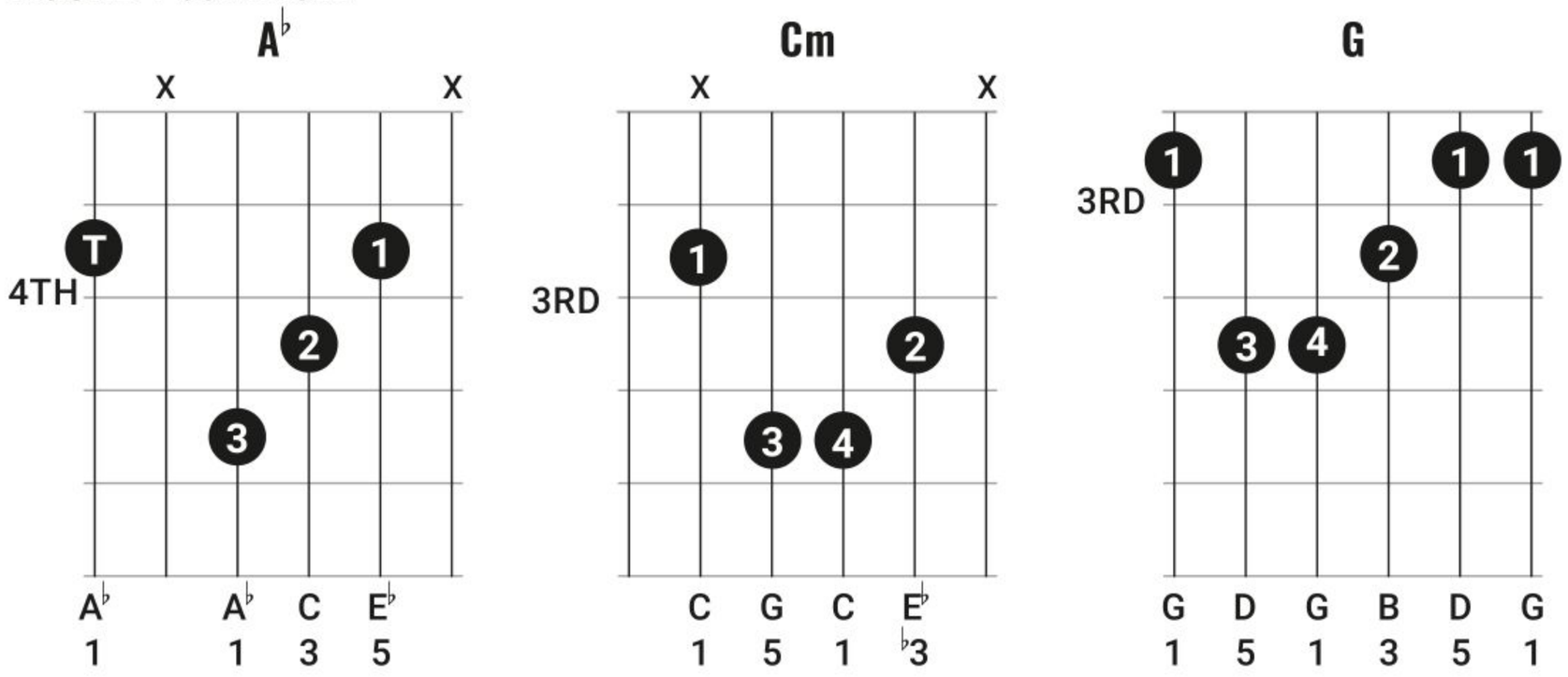


FIGURE 5

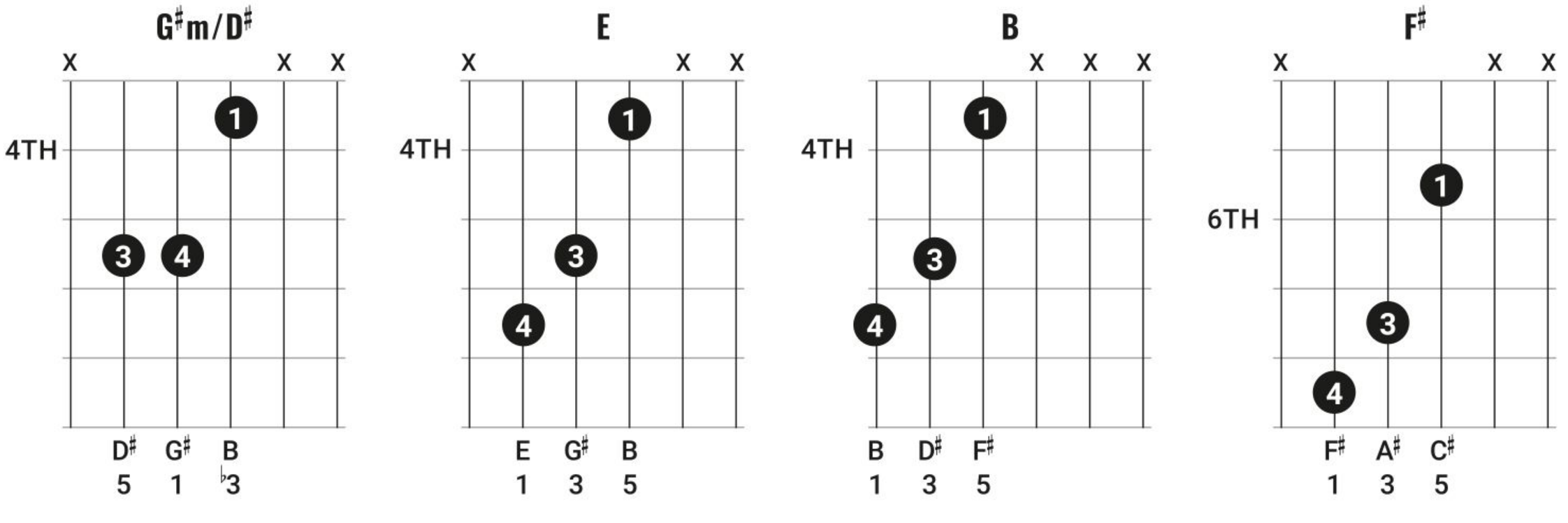
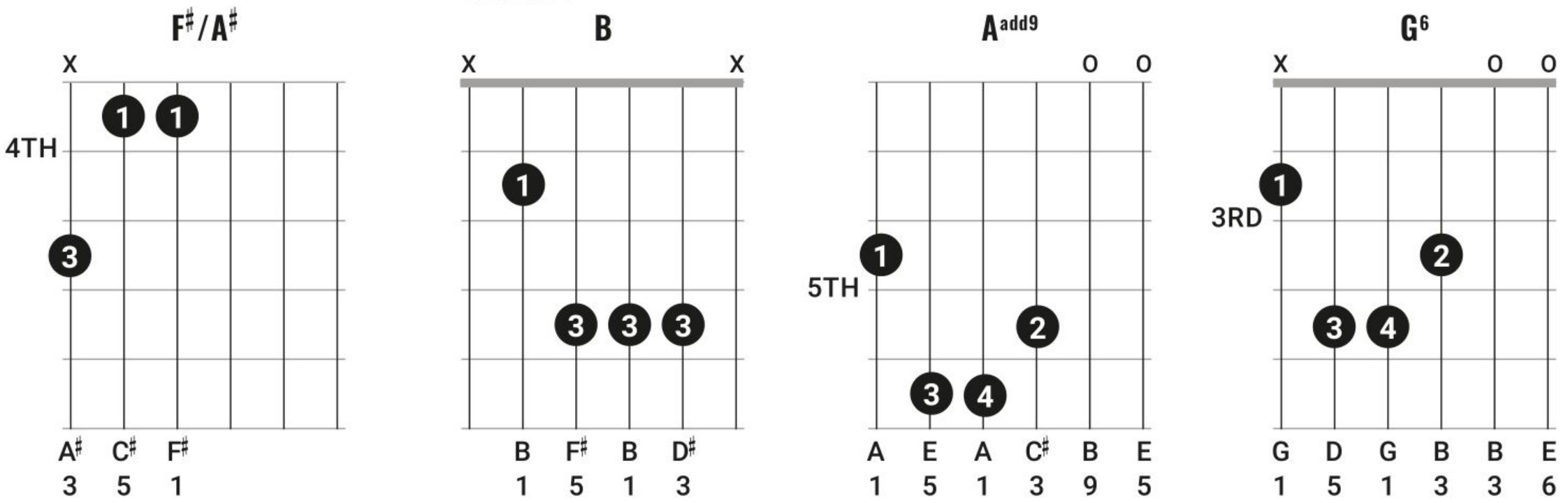


FIGURE 6



close relative of B7#5, which you could describe as B augmented with a seventh.

Figure 4 is a dreamy sequence of chords which you might use to play a song out at the end. There are seven chords which make eight bars of music by going back to the A♭ chord in between C minor and G. The chords themselves are not unusual, but we have included this sequence because harmonically speaking it is something of a mystery. There is only the most tenuous relationship between these chords.

Allow us to explain. E minor is in a different key to E♭. While there is a relationship between E♭ and B♭ (I-V), the next chord is D – different key again. The A chord is in another new key, in which C minor is chord iii. At a stretch, you could say the last four chords are Im-VI-Im-V in C minor, but at the end the G major chord leads back to… E minor.

Returning to the four-chord sequence for a moment, a trick that you can try is to start in the middle with chord vi. That makes it VI-IV-I-V. You can see this in figure 5, where is played in the key of B, with the added flavouring of the G#m chord having D# in the bass. Technically, that makes it a second inversion, which is what you get if the fifth of the chord is the bass note.

The final chord in figure 5, F#/A#, is for you to play the second time around; this time, it's a first inversion, with the third of the chord in the bass, keeping things interesting by adding a variation on the repeat.

You could also try playing these chords as arpeggios, adding a hammer-on/pull off combination two frets up from the top note of each chord.

We couldn't leave Frusciante's world without adding a few more chords which mix fretted notes and open strings. In figure 6, start on B major, slide up three frets to the D major shape from figure 1 and then play the next two chords with the open top strings and let ring. Enjoy that great splashy, crunchy sound! **G**

WorldMags.net

ALLPARTS (UK)

The UK's premier guitar, bass and amp parts supplier

Quality parts
for quality players

...bridges, necks, bodies, electronics, frets, inlay dots, pickups, knobs, switches, pickguards, tools scratchplates, strings, screws, nuts, saddles, tailpieces ...and much more!!!

Buy online at:
www.allparts.uk.com

Or call us on:
0800 849 8224 / 01494 410050

ABM, Bartolini, Bigsby, CRL, CTS, Danelectro, Earvana, Fender, Gotoh, Graphtech, Grover, Hipshot, Hofner, Dunlop, Oak Grigsby, Omega, Q-Parts, Razor, Schaller, Sperzel, Sprague, Switchcraft, Tremol-No, Tritan, Vibramate and Wilkinson.

Rob Williams

Rob Williams Custom Guitars

Professional guitar building
Repairs & Restorations

30 years of experience at your service.

Newtown, Powys
Mid Wales
Tel; 01686 689120

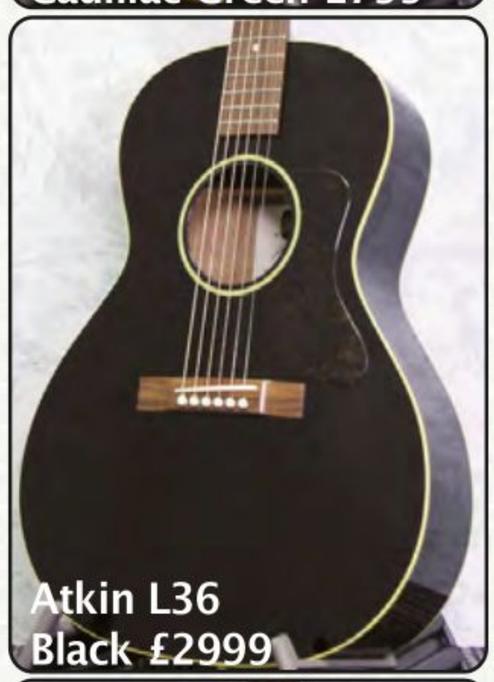
www.robwilliamsguitars.co.uk
www.facebook.com/robwilliamsguitars

Forsyth
Est 1857

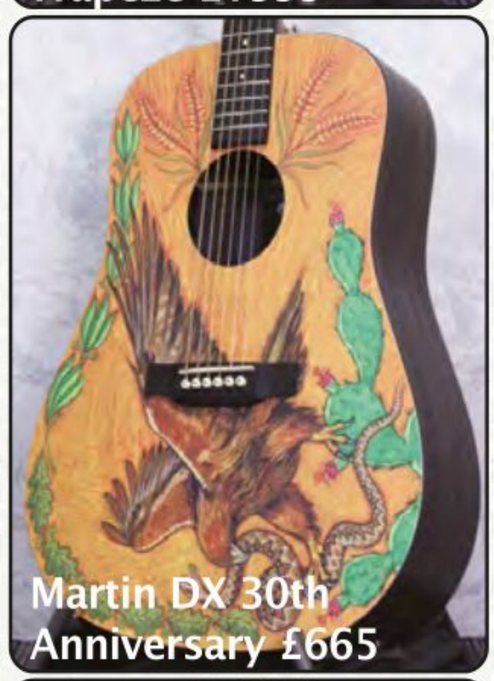
Highlights Of The Month

Gretsch G5420T Ltd
Cadillac Green £799

Eastman T64
Trapeze £1599



Atkin L36
Black £2999



Martin DX 30th
Anniversary £665

Hofner Klaus Voorman
60th Anniversary£4500

Danelectro '66 BT
Baritone £799

ACOUSTICS

Main dealer for Lowden, Atkin, Brook, Moon, Patrick James Eggle, Martin, Faith, Auden, Seagull, Fender, Eastman, Aria, Crafter, Maton, Furch, Tanglewood

CLASSICALS

Main dealer for Buguet, Ramirez, Raimundo, Sanchez, Ortega, Admira, Cordoba and Strunal

ELECTRICS AND BASSES

Main dealer for Rickenbacker, Gordon Smith, Eastman, Fender, Gretsch, Danelectro, Maton, Squier, Revelation, Aria, Hofner, Godin, Cort

Repair department specialising in acoustic and electric guitars

Spread across five stories in the heart of Manchester, Forsyth specialise in a full range of musical instruments, sheet music, a recorded music department specialising in classical and jazz and instrument repair

www.forsyths.co.uk/guitars

Forsyth Brothers Ltd, 126 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GR

@ForsythMusic Forsyths.Music.Shop

WorldMags.net

TALKBOX

IAN FOWLES

INTERVIEW JOSH GARDNER

The man who plays guitarist EagleBones Falconhawk in Emmy-winning kids TV rock band The Aquabats! on getting lost backstage, philosophical chats, and Millennium Falcon Fenders…

The moment it all started…
"My dad had a decent record collection and I remember when I was a kid he would play Led Zeppelin's song *Over The Hills And Far Away* and he'd turn it up really loud – so after the long acoustic intro, when the full band finally came in, it sounded like the heavens opening. It just hit me like a tonne of bricks. I knew I wanted to do that. That… plus watching Michael J Fox play *Johnny B. Goode* in *Back To The Future*. I would grab an umbrella or tennis racquet and run around jumping off the couch or stairs pretending I was playing guitar."

I couldn't live without my…
"I probably couldn't live without the Boss SD-1 Super Overdrive pedal. It was the first pedal I ever bought and is still my favourite go-to overdrive."

The one that got away…
"I'm kind of always on a perpetual tone-hunt. I'm always buying, selling, building, or trading gear, so I usually don't often get overly sentimental over gear except for my first Les Paul, a 1996 Wine Red Standard. I sold it after the headstock joint had broken three separate times. I didn't consider it roadworthy at that point, so I sold it. But then, after I bought a newer one to replace it, I realised that the new one – a 2001 black Standard – just didn't have the same mojo in it. It was then that I began to realise that some guitars have the magic in them and some don't. Hold on to the ones with the magic in them if you can find them!"

My signature model…
"If I were able to design a signature guitar, it would be fun to do a Fender Marauder. It was such a cool guitar that didn't get a fair chance. I love all the knobs and switches – it's like you're in the cockpit of the Millennium Falcon or something! I would find cool options for all of them. It would be Surf Burst in color and I would do a maple fretboard with big black block inlays, and I would call it the Masked Marauder, because I wear a mask in The Aquabats!."

The first thing I play when I pick up a guitar…
"When I pick up a guitar, I usually hit a big E chord. I want to see how the guitar vibrates before it's even plugged in. If it sounds good unplugged, chances are it's going to sound great when plugged in."

My Spinal Tap moment…
"I've definitely gotten lost backstage! It was this giant indoor amusement-park-type place in Delaware – I was playing and the green room was so far away through twisting hallways. Almost missed going on trying to find my way back to the stage."

My guilty pleasure…
"A Flock Of Seagulls!"

I'm in the band…
"If I could have been in any band, it would have been The Cars. I love their songs and the tones so much. Or The Smashing Pumpkins, just so I could get into philosophical discussions with Billy Corgan while on the road."

I wish I was there…
"If I could attend one gig in history, I think it would have to have been Live Aid at Wembley. Just to see Queen: one of the best live sets ever played by any band in history."

The most important thing on my rider…
"Socks. Preferably Stance Socks. A brand-new pair of socks everyday on tour is a magical thing. Socks… and Cherry Coke."

If I could just play one thing…
"I really respect all the old rockabilly/country players – stuff like Chet Atkins and Roy Clark. All their picking is so clean. Plus, the hybrid picking stuff is wild, I wish I could do that better." *G*

***Super Show! Television Soundtrack Volume One* by The Aquabats! is available now. For more info, visit theaquabats.com**

WorldMags.net

RELISH

« Perfectly balanced tonewise and very inspiring. Simply perfect! »

Phil Campbell, Guitarist for Motörhead

« An incredible work of art and a real positive vision of the future. »

Lionel Loueke, Guitarist for Herbie Hancock

SWAP PICKUPS INSTANTLY.

The plug&play pickup swapping revolution. Easily access pickups through the magnetically detachable back. Available in three hand-crafted models.

Find your Relish Guitar at

RELISH.SWISS

SILVERLINE

SERIES

STATE OF THE ART.

HIGH-END DIGITAL PERFORMANCE.
DUAL PATENT DESIGN WITH INFINITE SHAPE
FEATURE & POWER AMP RESPONSE.
CELESTION V-TYPE SPEAKERS.

Designed & Engineered
by Blackstar Amplification UK

Blackstar®
AMPLIFICATION

the sound in your head

Find your nearest dealer at
www.blackstaramps.com